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JAMES MEETWELL;
OR,
INCIDENTS, ERRORS, AND EXPERIENCES
IN THE
LIFE OF A SCOTTISH MERCHANT.

July

PEOPLE'S EDITION.



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ABBREVIATIONS OF THE
CRITICISMS ON "JAMES MEETWELL,"

PUBLISHED IN 1866.

ATHENÆUM.

WE can readily believe that we have a genuine autobiography before us; that James Meetwell is a being of flesh and blood, and not a figure constructed from the inner consciousness of some writer who is outwardly conscious of the ways of Scottish merchants. . . . Anyhow, whether the autobiography be genuine or not, a genuine man speaks from its pages. It is the record of a simple life, tinged with the sober colouring that suits it best—a life passed in humble business, and never rising above humble joys—a story without stirring or highly wrought passion—a character in no way different from the mass of common men. . . . But we are sure that all who have leisure for 'short and simple annals,' or who do not disdain humble feeling and touching of true pathos—all, in short, who have not got beyond nature—will thank us for our recommendation. We need to be reminded sometimes of everyday joys and trials. It does us good to be told what others are really doing, . . . and it may do us even more good to have our eyes wetted with honest tears at the sight of domestic tragedies, such as must come sooner or later in every household. The story of James Meetwell's life is not one which bears telling in brief. Incident, properly speaking, there is none; for the facts of his wishing to exchange town business for farming, and finding that he had mistaken his vocation of serving an apprenticeship at Glasgow, and then taking his uncle's shop at Leith; of giving bills rashly, and being almost overwhelmed during a commercial crisis, are trivial when taken by themselves; yet the reader finds himself interested in them. When a bill comes due and there are no assets at the bank, we look to see how the storm is weathered; and if we can enter so fully into these accidents of a man's business from the plain straightforward way in which he tells of everything that happened to him, we are naturally moved still more by the

accidents of life which befall him. The loss of his wife is related with most affecting simplicity, and the way in which, when describing the stillness of the house after her death, he says that he 'missed even the long teasing cough of poor mamma,' brings the whole scene home to us. Such touches may not be conclusive as to the reality of the Scottish merchant, but they leave us no doubt whatever about the merit of his book.

ATLAS, 16th June 1866.

'James Meetwell' seems to be, as it professes, a genuine autobiography, and no literary imposture. If it were, it would be a remarkably successful one—one which could hardly be exceeded by Defoe's masterpiece itself. It has the undoubted marks of being genuine. 'James Meetwell' is a placid and somewhat prosy and garrulous—but the prosiness and garrulousness are not displeasing, for they are quaint and characteristic—old Scotchman. Some of the earlier passages of this life story, and especially those in which the writer narrates the circumstances attendant upon the successive deaths of his father and mother, rise to a height of unmistakable beauty—a beauty all the more beautiful by virtue of the simplicity of the narrative and the entire absence of any intrusion of art.

The bulk of the book is composed of his commercial experiences, and is drier, but equally useful.

WEEKLY DISPATCH.

. . . His wife's long sickness and death, followed by that of a favourite daughter, brought him to the lowest stage of despondency. It was now as an antidote to inebriety he began in the evenings his autobiography; and as in all his troubles he had sustained a reputation for honesty, his friends at last rallied round him, his affairs were put straight, sufficient money was advanced to enable him to make cash payments, and buy goods on the most advantageous terms; so he prospered and married again, and the end of the book finds him with a grown-up family in a position not merely of respectability, but affluence. . . . Indeed, we pursue the writer's career with interest which warms as we read; here and there too are passages of genuine pathos, and despite the homeliness of the matter, and to some extent of the manner, the volumes deserve, and we believe will gain considerable popularity. We extract as a specimen—

'Catching a Tartar.'

COURANT.

In the present time of 'twaddling' on the one hand and of 'Chambers's Journaling' on the other, it is refreshing to meet with a book which is not intended as a vehicle for sickly sentiments or Cockney chaff. . When we say this book is not a vehicle for these purposes, we do not mean that there are no fine thoughts or original ideas spread through it; but those that are there seem rather to have escaped the author in spite of himself, than to have been anxiously polished and burnished before insertion. . . . But what fascinated us more than anything is the keen knowledge of human life and character which the book presents. The author is evidently telling his own life under the name of James Meetwell. His turn of mind is too practical and unsentimental to invent a tale of the sort, and the tale itself is too literal and unpolished to be a fiction. The author is a correct observer, and has depicted many life-like characters in the pages before us; none of which, however, comes up to the portrait of himself. The dangers, trials, and assaults to which a young man is exposed, and the frailties, errors, and failings of youth, are most happily described. He is a man whose education was neglected, . . and the consequence was that he flew to novels and tales, and could never fix his mind upon anything. . . . We venture to say that, if his mind had been properly trained, he would have made no mean name to himself in the world of letters. . . .

Mr James Meetwell retires into private life in prosperous circumstances. We give the concluding portions of this exceedingly interesting book.

CALEDONIAN MERCURY.

If we were compelled to regard the work as purely one of fiction, we should esteem it one of consummate art not only in its simulated reticence but in its simple style, which seems exactly that of a man tolerably well educated, but more accustomed to merchandise than authorship. Whether true or not, the whole story of James Meetwell's life is *truthful*; and although it comes to us as the autobiography of a mere 'ordinary' man, and has no strange or romantic incidents, it is very interesting. Our sympathy is engaged at once; we are anxious about the good behaviour of the boy and the prosperity of the man as if he were one with whom we were intimately connected. The whole character of the work is such that a parent should be glad to put it

into the hands of his sons, particularly if they are to be engaged in commercial pursuits. With all its simplicity of style it does not become wearisome even in what may be called the didactic parts, and many passages are full of true pathos, although to quote them is almost impossible, as much depends on what goes before. The names used are not such as we commonly find in novels, but rather names descriptive of character, as Mr Vainman, Mr Symmetry, Mr Bluff, after the fashion of the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' James Meetwell appears before us as an orphan boy, of whom his uncle takes charge. His parentage is humble enough; his uncle is a shopkeeper in Leith, in what line of business we are not told. A kind uncle he is; and his daughter Helen, a few years older than James, is kinder still. There is never anything of love between the cousins, but the affection of brother and sister throughout life. The character of Helen is extremely pleasing—wise, dutiful, gentle, and amiable. Of schoolboy days something is told—first concerning the school of Mr Forward, where Meetwell learns nothing, or next to nothing, and then concerning the school of Mr Worthy, who is all that is excellent, and whom his pupil Meetwell continues throughout life to remember with affection and respect.

School-days being over, Meetwell is apprenticed to a Mr Stately. . . . When he has nearly finished his apprenticeship he takes a fancy for a country life, and through the kindness of his master and his uncle, although his uncle is very reluctant, he is permitted to try it. He spends half a year or rather more in Fife with Mr Meadows, a farmer, and is glad to find an opportunity of returning to shopkeeping. Under deep religious impressions he had imagined a country life to be free from temptations, but finds, upon trial, that it is no better in this respect than life in town. He spends some years in Glasgow, and has good prospects there, when circumstances compel him to return to Edinburgh or Leith, and take up his uncle's business, now fast going to decay. Much of the story relates to difficulties in business, cash, credit, bills, borrowing, danger of bankruptcy, assistance of friends, and the like, but prosperity is at last attained. The incidents of Glasgow life are very pleasantly narrated, and some of the characters very vividly portrayed. Domestic life occupies almost as large a portion of the work as business life. An early attachment keeps the youth from yielding to temptations which might otherwise have been too powerful for him, and many obstacles being overcome, terminates at

last in a marriage. In this part of the story, and in the subsequent part of it, relative to the illness and death of Mrs Meetwell, there is much of pure and tender feeling, which pervades page after page and chapter after chapter; but when we look for a passage to quote, we cannot find one which is not far too long, or does not depend for its interest upon a knowledge of all that has gone before. . . . Some of the characters in the work are as well brought out as those of almost any novel; we seem, as we read, to become intimately acquainted with Meetwell himself, his uncle, his cousin, and others who are introduced to us. The book is one to be read with enjoyment and profit by young men, especially those entering upon mercantile life.

CITY PRESS.

'James Meetwell.'—This is a thoroughly good healthy work, devoid of sensationalism, yet full of interest. It is the story of the life of a man who fought 'the battle' manfully and well, encountering difficulty and temptation, and enjoying success when it came with calmness. It is a book that young men especially should read, for they will get much valuable advice and encouragement from it.

COURT JOURNAL.

'James Meetwell.'—This is a most extraordinary book. Is it a biography, or is it a novel? Who knows? Not we. Perhaps it bears the same relation to literal truth as the 'Confessions of Jean-Jacques,' only the Confessions are the wilfully distorted representations of facts; and these, if distortions, unconscious and purposed with the best intentions. It is a charming book, not to be read in a hurry; one of those to be 'chewed,' as Lord Bacon says, to be thought over, and with lessons to be brought home to the heart, when it is saddened with sorrow or chastened by adversity. The volumes once read will be read and re-read and re-read again with appreciative avidity.

PUBLIC OPINION.

'James Meetwell.'—We are told, needlessly we think, the present is not a work of fiction, and yet its pages possess a far deeper interest to the reader than many books whose special business is to amuse. The perusal of the incidents, errors, and experiences of James Meetwell will be fraught with benefit to the young who are just entering life. They will find in the two volumes before us the ordinary every-

day adventures of an ordinary man; of the trials and difficulties he had to contend with; how he fought against ruin; how he was nearly crushed, and how he gained strength to continue the conflict, and to finally triumph. . . . The whole narrative appears pervaded with the grand but simple principle of truth. . . . We, therefore, propose to recommend our readers to make themselves acquainted with the history of James Meetwell's career, promising, if they do so, they will not regret it. •

The simplicity of the narrative is perhaps its greatest charm, but there are several affecting scenes of a strictly domestic nature, which cannot fail to give interest. The reading of books like 'James Meetwell' is of incalculable advantage to those whose minds are forming, and with young lads the present story is sure to be a favourite.

BELL'S WEEKLY MESSENGER, 12th May 1866.

The incidents of this story are said to have been drawn from actual facts, and we can well believe it is so, because there is a plain, straightforward, and sensible manner about the telling of the ways and causes by which a young man, somewhat wayward and discontented at his start in life, pushes his way to station and respectability, which has upon its face all the appearance of reality. The career of James Meetwell, however, is but that of hundreds of others, who inherit neither fame nor fortune at their birth, but have to rely upon their own efforts to become respectable and useful members of society. How intense the labour is, till the turning point of success is reached to attain such an object, could not by any possibility be better expressed than it is in these volumes; for whilst they show that it is utterly impossible to rise in station or position without continuous exertion, it yet proves that no one needs to be disheartened, inasmuch as perseverance, backed by honesty of dealing and integrity of purpose, rarely meets with disappointment.

THE ABERDEEN JOURNAL.

This is a very interesting and instructing book. Perhaps there is no class of books so ill represented as those which afford an insight into the life and experiences of the middle classes, and more particularly those engaged in mercantile pursuits. . . . James took the notion into his head, with a fickleness common to youth, that a country life was the life for him, and notwithstanding all the suasion

brought to bear upon him by friends, his obstinacy prevailed; but after a short trial he was glad to avail himself of what he thought an honourable pretext for returning to town life. He now proceeded to Glasgow, where, after not a little difficulty, he succeeded in obtaining employment. Here he became associated with a number of young men whose vividly-drawn portraits form an interesting portion of the book. James's courting experience serves to throw into the narrative of his life a little bit of excellent romance. Eliza proved a most admirable and amiable wife; but James committed the too commonly fatal error of furnishing his house above his means. With an extract from his chapter on 'Commercial Travellers,' we close this notice.

No one of a thoughtful turn can doubt that when 'James Meetwell' was published the author awaited with fear and trembling to know the opinion of the reviewers, nor his intense gratification at such a hearty and kindly reception as his book met with, so beyond his utmost hopes. Not that there were no criticisms of a different nature. One or two from the English press, somewhat sarcastic and glad to have a slap at Scotch fashions, weaknesses, and errors; but, with one exception, all allowed the book, with all its imperfections, to possess merit and deserve public attention. The one exception was by a gentleman who seemed to be highly offended that any one who could not write with classic elegance should obtrude himself on public notice; and he used many disparaging terms towards the production, winding up by saying:—'I have not received any addition to my knowledge or a single new idea.' Now, without meaning to be sarcastic, no one need be surprised at this; for editors, as a class, are, or ought to be, the cleverest of men, brimful of knowledge of every sort, and J. M. never pretended to have made any new discovery. But when he goes on to say that the subjects are so commonplace as to yield no profit as lessons of experience, I must beg to differ from him, for I think this is the very pith and marrow of the book, if it has any virtue at all in it, for every page is full of lessons.

Lesson 1st. No one can fail to see what a great misfortune it was to me to have no parental superintendence of my education during the important years of my life from nine to twelve years of age. My time was almost entirely lost; and although I was one year after-

wards at Mr Worthy's, yet I left school almost entirely ignorant of elementary English grammar.

2d. My weakness, after I got into good credit, of buying far too many goods, partly from vanity and partly to please others, which obliged me to *push off* my stock; to offend my best customers by exceeding their orders, and trusting far too much to weak people, who often failed and involved me in heavy bad debts. Who that has read my experiences of 1826 and following years does not at once perceive, that if I could give away £1000 value of goods in security, and still have plenty left, I must have been fearfully overstocked?

3d. Who that reads the history of the club I frequented too frequently for two years, does not see that I was in the highway to ruin? Look at the ultimate fate of the members. And that I was saved I cannot ascribe to any other cause than my attachment and marriage.

4th. The losses and trouble brought upon me by iniquitous accommodation-bills need no comment.

5th. The over-furnishing of my dwelling-house at first, from my incompetence to make a correct estimate, as also did my friend Walter Vainman, are warnings against that imprudence which so soon brought repentance and punishment.

6th. My book throughout might have been written as a treatise to serve the temperance cause, although I had no such thought at the time.

7th. The seductive nature of living in hotels as commercial travellers is much lessened now since the introduction of railways, which prevent, in some measure, from the variety of train hours, the state four o'clock dinners, where the drinking usages were a rule not to be infringed on by any one with impunity. Excellent temperance hotels are now to be found in every respectable town.

8th. My friend, the once highly popular Tom Nobleman's case, is a striking example of the danger of trading beyond one's legitimate means. After his first and second failures he sank gradually into despondency, and died comparatively neglected, and nearly imbecile.

I had thought that my painful candour (for painful it frequently was to me to write of myself as I have done) must have lowered me in the eyes of many, but I was pledged to do it, and I am glad to see that with many it has been accepted as an apology for other faults, although not with the whole—I am sure I have good reason to be satisfied.

JAMES MEETWELL.

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CHAPTER I.

OPENINGS AND VISTAS.

IT was a Sunday evening about the first of October; tea had been over for an hour; the parlour fire had burnt hollow, before which my uncle sat in a doze, for the newspaper had fallen from his knee to the floor. We got the *Mercury* at six P.M. on Saturdays, and gave it to the next reader on Monday at breakfast-time; every reader paid twopence. Our parlour window looked up the open space between Salisbury Crags and the Calton Hill, and the light of a clear autumnal sky would have enabled you even yet to read good print. This was the third time I had meant to speak to my uncle; but as I knew the subject would offend him, my resolution had hitherto failed me, and it was likely to do so now. Determined, however, to break the ice, I went into the kitchen, where my Cousin Helen and our servant 'lassie' were busy at the Catechism. I took a mouthful of water from the bucket, entered the parlour again, and made some noise. My uncle roused himself a little, and I hastened to break the silence.

'I have been thinking for some time past that I will not like the business I am at.'

Fully awake now, my uncle gave me so hard a look of surprise, that I felt quite cowed.

'James, what do you mean?' said he.

I stammered, and explained that I had lost heart at my business, that I did not think I would like to follow it, and that it was a pity for me to lose my time by remaining any longer at it. My uncle again looked hard at me for a little.

'James,' said he, 'you surprise me. I had no idea that such nonsense filled your head. Think again what you are speaking of; take you a month to consider of it, and you must be convinced of the folly of giving up your present line of business, which I assure you is no bad one for a man to live by.'

I grumbled something about having already done so. I said I had thought long enough upon it already.

'Away with your whims!' said he, quite roused now; 'say no more about this. Are you crazy? What on earth would you be at? Have you not a good master? A man who begins to think of changing his trade at your time of life never does good. Take you a month, as I said before, and think well upon it, and I am sure you will give up such an absurd idea.'

This he spoke in a pretty sharp tone, as one that would be obeyed; so I dropped the subject at that time, with a firm determination to renew it as soon as the month he spoke of was out. Short as it was, it seemed tedious to me. I took my uncle's advice, and thought much on the subject; but it was all in favour of my own plan, which I nursed and cherished with the warmest zeal. My resolutions were not only not changed, I was strengthened and fortified in my own opinions. I considered my purpose in the light of a vow which I ought to perform most faithfully, notwithstanding all the opposition and mortifications I might encounter in the fulfilment of it.

These considerations gave me courage to attack my uncle a second time on the same subject, although as I saw him sitting calmly at his book, unthinking of any such concern as mine, but quite intent on his favourite author, my heart smote me for the pain I thought I was about to inflict upon him. I was also pretending to be reading. Helen was gone to make a call on a sick neighbour. Several times I essayed to speak, but my resolution failed me. I got quite confused, forgot what I meant to say, and again I had recourse to the water-bucket.

As soon as I entered the parlour door I forced out, 'I am still of the same mind as when I spoke to you last about my business.'

My uncle gave a sigh, but said nothing, and I felt much oppression and palpitation of heart; for I was not insensible that I was hurting the good heart of the only one on earth whom I had to thank for a comfortable home when left destitute by the death of my parents, seven years before. These thoughts caused me much pain. At last my uncle laid aside his book, and drew himself up deliberately.

'I did not expect, James,' said he, 'that you would have again returned to this very foolish subject; but will you tell me what you mean to follow after? for my plan was, after you had acquired experience, you might have assisted me, and succeeded to my business,

as I am now growing rather old. My business is not so good as it used to be; still it is not a bad one, and I hoped you might make it better.'

At which words I was considerably moved. I tried to express how deeply sensible I was of all his goodness; but my conscience blamed me so justly, that I durst not utter what was so like an untruth, and I was obliged to be silent. My uncle now informed me that he had promised my master that I should be five years with him, and that for my service I was to receive twenty-five pounds in all. I never till now knew there was any bargain concerning me. My uncle—honest, easy man—had never told me. I had now been four years with Mr Stately; and had I known this, it is not likely that I would have taken up any notions of leaving, especially if I had been bound, which I was not—a circumstance for which my uncle quite blamed himself.

Silence again ensued. Helen, who had been made acquainted with my intentions by her father, now took me to task on my fickle nature. This was the very opportunity I had desired; for I wanted a coadjutor in one with whom I was perfectly at ease, and who could hear all my reasons. So I launched out into a grand panegyric on a country life—its quiet, its retirement, its innocence; and contrasted it with that of a town, where, as I said, all was bustle,—no leisure, no time for quiet thought; only a continual scramble, a wild hunt after money, pleasure, or ambition, to say nothing of the glaring vices rampant everywhere, and barely concealed. Poor Helen! instead of turning me from my purpose, I almost made a convert of her; and I was delighted to hear her declare that she had not viewed it in that light before, all the while that the tears stood in her eyes.

On the following Sunday, I again asked my uncle if he would speak to Mr Stately.

'I see, James, it's in vain,' he answered, 'to strive with you. This fancy of yours will lead you into trouble. I am satisfied I cannot prevent your following it, surprising though it be in a man of more than seventeen years of age. I am sorry for your own sake, and also upon account of the trust committed to me by your parents. But I need say no more. I will speak to Mr Stately, on this condition, that you will tell me what you mean to do after you leave him. I am afraid you scarcely know yourself.'

This allusion to my parents moved me a little, and I remained silent. I could perceive that he looked at me with a considerable degree of

concern, as if he felt sorry for me, and I thought I could not do better than leave matters as they were that day.

On the same night, as soon as I had gained the secrecy of my bedroom, I took out my writing materials, and addressed a letter in the following terms :—

‘DEAR UNCLE,—The mention of my parents prevented me from being able to tell you my intentions after leaving Mr Stately. You will perhaps think me foolish, but I am very anxious to be a small farmer, or to follow some other occupation in the country. I am sorry you do not approve of my intentions, but perhaps your friend Mr Meadows would put me in some way of beginning. I am willing to work at anything, but I do not like the town. I never had any opportunity before of saying how deeply I am sensible of your fatherly kindness to me, and I will endeavour to do all I can to prove my gratitude to you; but I repeat, uncle, I cannot bring myself to like the town. If you would only speak to Mr Stately and Mr Meadows at the very first opportunity, I would really be much obliged to you.—Dear uncle, from your affectionate nephew,

‘JAMES MEETWELL.’

It was three o'clock in the morning before I finished my letter. I spoiled five copies before I could get one to please me. Do I say to please me? no, it is not true; for to refuse compliance with my uncle's reasonable request that I should stick to my proper business, and in the same breath to profess gratitude, was grossly inconsistent. My epistle, such as it was, I left on the parlour chimney-piece when I went out from breakfast. My uncle took no notice of it for a week, and I began to be uneasy again. In the meantime I had a conversation with Helen and Eliza Miller upon the subject, in a walk by moonlight up to Edinburgh. Helen opened by saying she had been telling Eliza that I was going away to leave them and turn ploughman. Eliza seized the opening thus made, and in her own artless strain of simple-like raillery, tried to turn me from my purpose. We had a very animated conversation, and were so well pleased with each other that we took an extra turn upon the hill. In moving along, Eliza stopped us rather suddenly. She said, ‘Stop, now, Mr James, and tell me if you ever saw a finer sight.’ A slight degree of frost had cleared the atmosphere; the moon was high above Arthur Seat. It was indeed beautiful. The moonbeams on the waters of the broad firth on the

one hand; the city, with its faint and mingled cries and scattered lights, on the other. We had long been estranged. We seemed now thoroughly reconciled, and I was so happy! Nor did the presence of Helen form any restraint upon us, or upon our conversation. Altogether, it was a time, a place, a happy combination of circumstances which so impressed me, that even now, after so long a period, I recall it as one of the very 'greenest spots of memory's waste.' Eliza pushed her advantage. She knew the country and country people better than I did; and, having the worst of the argument, and being unable to answer fairly, I said something ungraciously, on which she refrained. We now turned our steps towards her home; and on regaining the street, we were joined by a gentleman, whom I knew quite well as one who had long paid attention to Eliza. He accosted her in such an easy way, that it appeared only a matter of course when he offered and she accepted his arm; and then he chatted so fluently about the theatre, balls, titled personages, etc., that I shrank within myself at the sorry contrast I made as opposed to him. I felt the first pang of jealousy. I was miserable. We parted at Mrs Winterman's door, with outward friendship. But how great the transition from elevated, heartfelt happiness to the heartburnings of mortification! I could not speak a pleasant word to Helen as we walked homewards. She did not want penetration or good sense, and, kind-hearted creature as she always was, she bore with me without complaining. I tried to rally my feelings, and to assume to myself as if I did not care a straw about Eliza; but all would not do. I sank subsequently into deep dejection; and with a sort of desperation clung to my country scheme, though my confidence in it was shaken. I was not now half so sure I was right. Eliza's remarks had pierced me, and rendered me uneasy; and the firm ground on which I had formerly stood seemed undermined. Yet, with an obstinacy, generated perhaps partly by the fear that I might after all be mistaken, I resolved to shut my eyes and ears, and go doggedly forward. Under the influence of these feelings, I asked my uncle if he had yet spoken to Mr Stately. A brief 'No' made me aware he was displeased. So was I with myself, with him, with everybody, and everything.

But my doggedness continued. Three days afterwards I actually took courage to say to Mr Stately, that if he was passing near my uncle's in the course of the day, would he please look in upon him? My hint took effect; for, shortly after, he went out, and was absent

about two hours. When he returned he seemed highly excited, and did not leave me a moment in suspense.

‘Upon my word, James,’ said he, ‘you have given me a great surprise to-day. So you wish to be a farmer, and of course a ploughman to begin with?’ (A pause, but I said nothing.) ‘Whatever you may think, James,’ he continued, ‘it is my opinion that this is a very foolish step. I know you are not bound to stop with me. It wants more than a year of the expiry of the time which your uncle promised me you were to remain. I hope you will give up this folly, for folly I consider it most decidedly to be. If you stay out your time, I think I have influence enough to get you a creditable place in Glasgow or London; and I will give you a good character, as you well deserve.’

To this speech I made no answer. I believe I looked sheepish and sulky both, for I was now quite doubtful of the propriety of my scheme.

Now that all were against my country scheme,—my uncle, Mr Stately, Helen, and Eliza,—it may be asked, Why did I not yield up my judgment like a reasonable being? To which I may answer, that it is very unpleasant to confess yourself foolishly mistaken; and for me to admit that I had been wrong, was more than I was ready to do. But a new reason came to my aid. Since I had last seen Eliza, I had lost all the hopes I ever had of her affections. I took myself to task severely for my presumption: and that it *was* presumptuous was to me clear enough; for her person, and not less her manners, were such as might entitle her to be the partner of one who could keep her like a lady, as she certainly was. Why, then, should I not avoid her company? My thoughts were bitter enough already, and this made me more anxious to bury myself in my country solitude. As to what I was to do there, I could not define. A hazy sort of mist enveloped me. I thought that Mr Meadows would shape out something for me; but I thought so only because every one spoke so favourably of him. I had seen him often; and I was sure that I would shun no hardship or hard work that he might put me to. In short, I flattered myself that I would become useful to him and acquire his goodwill; and upon this vague hope I rested.

But fate seemed rather to favour my scheme, for Mr Meadows came over in the nick of time, as nicely as if he had been sent for. He was a regular customer, and took a bit of early dinner with my uncle ere he crossed for home; for he was always in Edinburgh by the first boat

that would take him, and as soon home again as possible. It was my dinner-hour at the same time; and my uncle, thinking I was sick of my nonsense, thought it an excellent opportunity for bantering me fairly out of it.

'By the by, Mr Meadows,' said he, 'James there is very anxious to be a farmer. Do you think he would make a good one?'

'Our farmers,' replied Mr Meadows with a laugh, 'are bred in a different way from what James has been. They begin by mucking the byres, and feeding the pigs, and herding the cattle, till they are fit for the plough; and there is much to be done after that: and abune a', he maun hae a weighty purse when he takes a farm.'

During the delivery of which speech I felt my face warm; but I was determined not to let slip this desired opportunity, so I allowed the conversation to go on between them for ten minutes, and when the farmer was about to take leave, I struck in—

'Mr Meadows,' said I, 'my uncle is joking; but he knows I am serious, for I have been telling him so for some weeks past; and I hope you will be so good as take me for a year, and let me work for my victuals. I'll not perhaps be of much use to you, but I think I will be willing.'

Mr Meadows smiled and looked at my uncle, who was under a mixed feeling of pity and anger.

'Do not look at me,' said he; 'James is determined to have his own way, and so he shall for me.'

The honest farmer smiled again somewhat uneasily: he did not know how to act betwixt us; but time pressed, so he said hastily, 'My lad, I think you are in the wrong; but if you are to make the trial, I can give you work enough, perhaps more than you will thank me for ere all be done. But I must hurry away, for it's near the boat's time. Good-day, good-day!' and he was off, probably very well pleased to leave a disagreeable scene, and alarmed lest he should lose the boat.

As for myself, I felt very glad that I had thus brought my determination to a prosperous conclusion; and next day, when I left the shop to go to dinner, I laid on Mr Stately's desk the following note:—

'SIR,—I take the liberty of saying that I am still of the same mind as to leaving. I have got the prospect of a situation in the country, and I would like to go to it as soon as you think you can spare me.'

On my return he said, 'I will attend to your request, James.' I saw he was offended, and this sank my spirits very sadly, for I knew he was too much of the gentleman to ask me a second time. I felt I was now committed beyond recall. By-and-by another young man made his appearance. I did my very best for the short time we were together to make him understand all his duties; and although he was rather playful with me, and I had almost to chastise him at times, we were good friends ever after through life.

Other things tended to depress me. The customers, seeing the new apprentice, got a scent of what was a-brewing, and jeered me, but never beyond the point where they saw it hurt my feelings. It was pleasant to me to know that I was respected and regretted. But this only helped to sink my spirits still lower. I became quite doubtful if I was not rather indulging my own stubbornness of will than doing an act acceptable to God, as I had long made myself believe. I thought of my ingratitude to my uncle and to Helen; also that my master was offended at me. Eliza too, whom I had seen twice of late, remarked my sadness, and very kindly tried to cheer me up by a little raillery. But I got no further than a faint smile, for I was oppressed by the consciousness of my petulance to her, and my uncharitable thoughts of her on former occasions; and when I considered that I might soon part from her, never to see her more, I need not say how I felt.

The time of my leaving the shop meanwhile arrived. Mr Stately paid me the full sum of twenty-five pounds. I thought this handsome of him. Some might have considered it otherwise, but five pounds a year was not uncommon as apprentice wages then. I had a feeling as if I had not been honourable to my master; but really the idea of two such wise men as my uncle and Mr Stately making a bargain for me of a five years' apprenticeship, and never once even telling the fact to me, who certainly was the principal party concerned, tended to remove all my scruples. However, I had got my liberty; yet I was far from being transported with pleasure upon the occasion. I had formed the resolution of exchanging a town for a country life in April, and so long as the fine weather lasted my heart rejoiced in the part I had chosen; but when brown October had given place to foggy November, and the fogs had melted into rains for two or three days together, as happened at this time, my confidence in my plans fell utterly away, and left me again dejected and almost ashamed; the suspicion still rising, that my behaviour had been childish, and that I was an object of pity or of

scorn to my best friends. But I kept these thoughts to myself; and meanwhile Helen busied herself in providing me with thick stockings, strong shoes, substantial vests and under-vests, and one of uncle's greatcoats was made over again to suit me.

It was again on a Sunday: I was to leave on the Wednesday following; and after tea my uncle handed me a tied-up and sealed packet, addressed to myself in the handwriting of my mother, 'To be delivered to James after he is fifteen years of age.' My uncle merely remarked, 'I have overlooked this longer than I thought; but I hope there will be no harm done.' I immediately retired to my bedroom and opened the parcel. There was a pretty well-filled commonplace-book, chiefly notes of texts and sermons, and records of marriages, births, and deaths, and family matters; the first part all written by my father, with very few exceptions; the latter part all by my mother after my father's death. Besides this, there were two pair massive silver shoe-buckles, large and heavy. My father wore these, as was then the fashion. There were rings, lockets, etc., of my mother's; and carefully preserved locks of hair of the deceased children. How impressive all these things were to me! I set me down to the perusal of the book and a number of letters, which were also enclosed; and I got so deeply absorbed in the solemn review of bygone days, that when Helen came to my door at nine o'clock to call me to supper, I told her that I did not want any, and that I would go to bed in an hour. I did not want to be seen that night. From this commonplace-book, and from what I remembered, and assisted by Helen's very retentive memory (she was some years my senior), I have been able to compile a brief narrative of all events of importance in my own history, till I came to be the young man ready for conscience' sake, as I then thought, to embrace a rural life.

CHAPTER II.

REMINISCENCES.

RECURRING to my parents, I may begin by saying that there was nothing romantic about the courtship and marriage of my father and mother, for with them the course of true love did truly run smooth.

They had known each other many years; they were members of the same congregation; they waited till all prudential considerations were adjusted, and then married with the approbation of all concerned. They were not fortunate in their family: the two who preceded me were taken away—two boys; the one who succeeded me—the first daughter—lived to the age of four years. I have a dim recollection of her death, and the sensation of grief which overshadowed our house then. It wore over. All is recorded in said commonplace-book. My father had been twelve years in the employment of Mr Allworthy—five years as an apprentice, and seven years more at wages progressing till they reached a guinea a week. The average number of hands kept was twenty-four, sometimes as high in brisk times as forty, females included. In dull times, they would sink as low as fifteen hands, just to keep the wheels moving, waiting the reaction. By this time my father was factotum or Jack-of-all-trades to the concern. Whatever depended on good temper, tact, and judicious management, was assigned to him; whether to coax an order out of a stingy and timid customer, or settle a disputed account by patient, quiet reasoning, or by, as he said, risking a small concession, although Mr Allworthy should be displeased. At the establishment slight accidents—as burns, scalds, and cuts—were frequent; and my mother was so dexterous in treating these, and so gentle and sympathizing with the humblest creature of them all, that almost through the course of my whole life I met kindness and assistance from those who had come under her hands. Scattered as they were over the provinces in after years, it was quite refreshing to me to meet with these grateful beings. As for Mr Allworthy, he was a little pompous, estimated himself highly, was occasionally a magistrate, always an elder of the Established Church—a little slow, and a little lazy, it taxed my father's powers and industry to make all right, and keep all up to the mark. But Mr Allworthy was gentlemanly, just, and even generous; and although not openly acknowledging it, gave evidence that he was quite sensible of my father's value.

Coming to something more particular, it so happened that my father had been employed by Mr Allworthy to make a circuit of thirty or forty miles; and it was thought he could easily accomplish this and return at night, as it was the long day. He left very early, and having to make ten or twelve calls, and getting hindrance at first, he soon found he had too much on hand for one day's work. This caused

him to walk faster than he otherwise would have done. Umbrellas were not so common then, or mackintoshes either, and twice that day he got soaked to the skin; nor did he mind dinner, as he meant to be home to his own house by six P.M., where he knew he would be comfortable. Unfortunately, he met the clerk, who told him that Mr Allworthy wished to see him, and thinking he would not be detained, he went at once; but Mr Allworthy was busy with a gentleman adjusting an extensive bargain, and my father was kept in the anteroom for consultation as obstacles arose. It was half-past eight ere he reached home,—very pale, and complaining of severe headache and shivering. When he got up next morning, he sickened and took to bed again. Then came pain and difficulty of breathing. The pain increased: the doctor was noted for using the lancet; and I remember the shudder which passed over me when three times two cups full of blood, and a large quantity besides in the plate, met my eyes, standing on the kitchen table to cool till the doctor should judge by its top if the inflammation was removed. It was so partially after each bleeding, but recurred again and again. On the fourth or fifth day he died.

How can I avoid thinking he was bled to death? We never hear of such treatment now; and yet this doctor—Mr Allworthy's medical adviser—was second to none in character at the time. Had my father only had the presence of mind to go to Mr Allworthy's kitchen-fire, and get a glass of whisky or basin of hot tea, or both, surely his premature death might have been avoided; for he came of a hardy ancestry, and there was not a single flaw in his whole constitution so far as we knew. Such a death as this is shocking; occurring in noon-day health and strength, his bones full of marrow, and life at the full flow. As for me, I was too young to feel or to appreciate it. Not so with my mother; she was heart-broken, literally so. That terrible grief of hers is the first distinct impression my memory retains. For as many years as have since elapsed, I remember well, after the funeral was over, and all in our little dwelling quiet and lonely, how night after night we sat by the fireside—the deep-drawn, quivering sighs by which she vainly sought to ease her overburdened heart—her expressions of the great bereavement we had sustained, sometimes accompanied by exclamations of the deepest despondency, yet always ending by giving utterance to a pious hope and confidence in the goodness and mercy of God.

My mother had received an education strictly useful, and it was

well for her now ; for by her own industry she maintained us both, and, as the saying is, kept house above her head. She was an excellent needlewoman, uncommonly handy at any fine work ; and her situation and wish to obtain employment having been soon known to several ladies, they never allowed her to be idle. I can say also that she was a devoted Christian. We spent an hour every night over the Bible and New Testament ; and well I remember a fascinating way she had of imparting sacred knowledge : bit by bit it came out ; never tiring you, if it was not rather that she was often the first to tire of it herself. But one thing I deeply regretted—that she would not come to bed when I went. She sat up working always till midnight ; using the justification, as I heard afterwards, ‘I am better working than lying sleepless in bed ; for, alas ! the night is always too long for me now.’ Otherwise things did not look so ill. My father left property, in cash, furniture, books, and clothing, to the extent of seventy pounds. Mr Allworthy, in the most handsome manner, defrayed every expense, including our mournings. He gave us no alternative ; he would have it so. I suppose it cost him fifteen pounds in all. My mother would not part with a single article which had been my father’s, until about the end of a year, when Mr Allworthy pushed forward a party to offer ten pounds for his whole wearing apparel. With difficulty the sale was accomplished, though the sum was more than the value of them.

My uncle and my father had been through life fast friends, each inquiring into the other’s affairs with an earnest gravity, which showed that if it was in his power he would relieve his brother from trouble. My uncle was a widower, with Helen as an only daughter. She was a very young housekeeper ; and as my uncle would hear of no other, my mother had for a time gone one whole day of every week to instruct and assist her. Helen’s character was a very singular one. A more humble, grateful, kind-hearted creature it was hardly possible to find anywhere. She was utterly incapable of giving offence or pain to the most insignificant creature. A beggar she could never deny ; and she was always ready to sacrifice her own wishes and her own comfort to please her father or any one of us. She was always ready to give up the comfortable seat by the fire, or the best bits at meals, or shift her bed in favour of any stranger, or lend all her little store of money to any one she thought needed it. There was no selfishness in her composition, and no limit to her self-denial. Her soft and timid disposition, while it endeared her the more to her father, gave him great uneasi-

ness, for he saw quite well she never could be an economist. All the lectures bestowed upon her to effect this purpose, ended invariably in this, that she attempted to save off her own food, or her own pocket-money, or her own dress. My uncle was in despair, and my mother said, 'If it was any one else but Helen, I would be angry at her; but who could be angry with her? I could cry for her, but I could not be angry at her,—she is so gentle and so kind.' The servant 'lassie' even saw it and presumed upon it, and treated her more like an equal than her mistress; but if the servant had any good in her, Helen's conduct was sure to bring it into play, which was some counterbalance. Yet, under all this softness, Helen was no fool. She could discriminate between characters acutely when in confidential talk, and withal she was not extravagant or careless; while, as for her honesty, she was staunch to the heart's core, and would never flatter any one by saying what was not true. My uncle, I remember, was chiefly provoked by the poor wives or widows of the neighbourhood, who knew when he was out of the way, and made their visits stealthily. They praised Helen for her kindness, and invoked blessings on her; all which had little effect compared with the praise of her deceased mother, which these adepts dealt lavishly in, and this always melted her. These creatures he sometimes met in the close or on the stair; and the consequences were often unpleasant words and unpleasant lectures to poor Helen, who bore them meekly. Nevertheless, when my uncle and my mother summed up all, they found the house expenses quite moderate by comparison of many others, where carelessness, hashing, or dishonesty prevailed; and they both agreed to watch over and help her against all her weaknesses.

I have said my uncle had only one daughter; true, but he had two sons, who were wilful; they would go to sea, and both went into the service of the States of America. They had taken up notions of disaffection to their native country so prevalent then; and as their father found, by dire experience, that they only kept up correspondence with him to seek money and more money out of him, he gave them up. My uncle never willingly alluded to them or his deceased wife. There was a reason, I believe: she had taken part with the lads against their father. I never asked particulars.

It was in vain that my mother's friends urged upon her the propriety of selling my father's books and drawing instruments, and even his watch (as there was a good clock in the house), so as she might not be

obliged to work above eight hours a day, whereby she would preserve her health. She admitted that they were right, and to gratify them she went out to tea frequently; but as that again interfered with my lessons, she refused so often their invitations that she tired her friends out, and they gave over asking her. All, however, saw and said that her health would soon give way. Even my uncle could not influence her to sell her treasures or stint her hours of work; and the day she was at Leith, or the nights she was out at tea, she made up by extra hours and midnight work. A deep and settled dejection had indeed taken possession of her whole mind. My uncle did much, and would have done more if permitted. On New Year's day, a nice cheese; at other times a ham, a pound or two of tea, meal and potatoes when he got his own,—always with some pleasant message to lighten the burden of obligation, as if he could never do enough for an elder brother's family, who had almost been a father to him. The return was needle-work and weekly visits to help Helen; so that my uncle used to joke her, that if she made out her bill against him, he would still be her debtor. As for me, all this time I was continued with the same teacher, an easy, pious, respectable man, whose mode of teaching would now be looked upon as a burlesque: he was of the slow and sure school; no exotics for him; he liked open-air plants. I may add here, that it became evident to all that my mother wished to remain in the old house, with everything around her remaining the same as when the death took place. She would never for a moment listen to the proposal to live with my uncle and Helen; nor did she ever give a reason, only that she could not think of it.

In these habits of seclusion she persevered. Her chiet relaxation was a long walk with me when church was over on Sundays, an hour and a half, if the weather permitted, and then we had a relish for our tea: or in the long days we would saunter out and try to get a secluded spot full in the evening sunbeams, where we might linger viewing the beauties of nature, and the gay crowd in the distance, till the long shadows warned us to be off. The box of letters was always taken out after I was put to bed, and she lingered over them, I do believe, till midnight. In the winter time, when the nights were dark and cold, my uncle insisted that she should come down with James, or he would come up with Helen. My mother had scruples about this way of spending Sunday evening; but my uncle, with great tact and good sense, made her easy. And I feel certain that this social mixed

conversation did us all much good ; for my uncle had seen and made good use of many years, possessed good sense, had a large amount of general information, and had moreover his own way of spending the first day of the week as scrupulously and to the satisfaction of his conscience as any one ; nor was he unaware that mind and perception may be destroyed, and even truth, beauty, and holiness distorted, by a cruel monotony. Indeed, when I reflect upon the remarkable attention which my uncle and Helen paid to us, I feel truly happy in the reflection, that it has since been in my power to repay them in some degree at least, and I thank God I have been as willing as I was able.

But my thoughts run all in an effort to call up before my memory the likeness of my dear mother. I cannot restrain my pen from relapsing again and again into the pleasing employment of narrating the history of this time, and painting, as far as memory serves, her likeness ; yet no one can enter fully into my feelings who has not been similarly circumstanced. At the distance of almost a lifetime, it is surprising to myself how tenacious my memory is of her characteristics. But is it memory, or is it imagination which so warms my whole being when I think of her, and places before my mind's eye such semblances of a being to me more like an angel than a mortal ? About the age of thirty-five years ; of a slender, well-formed person ; a single degree above the middle size, yet not tall ; a clear, pale face ; carefully neat and clean in her person and dress, which, although of common stuffs, she had the skill so to arrange as always to maintain the appearance of a lady ; self-denying as to all her own wants, but always gentle and indulgent to me, she had me entirely at command. The settled dejection which ever since my father's death had spread itself over her heart, had also imparted to her countenance a melancholy cast. It was rarely she was betrayed into a smile, yet that smile, coming so seldom, was in my estimation delightful : it was as if a heavenly glow overspread her face. But how transient it was ! so suddenly withdrawn, as if memory had checked her for indulging it ; and then it was succeeded by a long-drawn, quivering sigh.

I have spoken of certain letters ; in explanation of which, I may mention that Mr Allworthy had sent my father for three months to Glasgow, to acquire information generally as to the state of the same business in that quarter, and always said that that money was well spent, for many useful alterations were made after my father's return.

A weekly correspondence had been kept up by my parents at this time; and the twenty-four letters, carefully written, and full of entire confidence, and seasoned with a graceful mixture of sincere religious matter, were all carefully preserved, and form a true index to the character of the writers. There were also a number of letters written before their marriage, and the contrast between the two sets struck even my youthful mind: the courtship letters were so full of sanguine anticipations; every object in nature was so beautiful, every one so good, everything was to be so favourable, and happiness and harmony were to last for evermore. But after marriage, and the death of a little one, how chastened the language, how minute the description of commonplace matters,—all, however, connected with themselves, and the inevitably frequent mention of pecuniary considerations! Yet these letters had a charm for me. I was very young then, and allusions to my health, appearance, and temper were frequent. An earnest solicitude that each should take good care of their own health was never wanting in any letter; little judicious presents, so well timed; and, above all, that *entire confidence* in the love of each other. A notice of the minister, his text, and sermon, were frequent ingredients, and a very short moral drawn therefrom.

The commonplace-book kept by my parents now comes to form a part of my narrative. Every interesting event, every occasion of joy and sorrow, were entered in this book. How pleasant it is to keep such a record! It is like milestones in the path of life. How profitable to refer to it often, and thereby recall to our remembrance all the good that God has done for us!—to help us to improve all His chastenings, having them always in remembrance, and using them as stimulants to warn, to excite, and to stir us up to walk steadily onwards through life in such a manner as becomes Christians indeed; to reach forward and beyond this fleeting world to an inheritance which shall endure for ever, feeling that all we learn, all we suffer here, is but part of the education of our immortal spirits, to make us wiser and riper for an eternity of progression, even as we are promised.

I will here give a few of the entries:—

Entry of their marriage, signed by both, and the divine blessing invoked.

Present of a family Bible from Mr Allworthy.

Long notice of a sermon. A thunderstorm broke out in the middle

of it. The minister stopped and read out the forty-sixth psalm, which was sung with great fervour.

New Year's day; recapitulation of events, with thanks.

A commemoration of mother's sister's death, which took place that day nine years; and fitting reflections.

An addition to the family.

'I do not think I ever spent a whole week in enjoyment before. Let us not forget to "join trembling with our mirth."'

'I have been strongly solicited to join the newspaper club, which meets twice a week at Wilkie's tavern. Everybody is reading the newspapers now. But as it leads to the public-house, I will not go. Mr Allworthy has promised me a reading of his paper; and although it's a London one, and a week old, it will do for me.'

'I am again comfortable at home; and although it was rather a trial to leave it for so long a time, especially on Mary's account, who took it so much to heart, yet I do not now regret it, since the pleasure I feel so far overbalances it, and the insight I have gained into many things, I hope, will turn out very useful both to Mr Allworthy and myself. I think far more of my home, and of my goodwife and little boy, than if I had not been away. When I came to the top of our street, I felt a qualm lest all should not be well at home. I walked quickly along, and near our entry I saw our baker standing in his door. He came forward and shook hands most heartily, and said he saw my wife and boy going out for a walk half an hour before. I felt most thankful for this intelligence, and breathed freely. Having my pass-key, I made my way into the house, and had time to clean and shift myself ere they returned; for I was most uncomfortably covered with dust, etc. As soon as Mary opened the door, seeing my greatcoat and umbrella, "Eh, my little man, your father's come back!"'

'We are in mournings for uncle's wife, who died of putrid sore-throat. She had not been in a thriving way for a year, and I can hardly say what really was the matter. We were much afraid for infection; but my wife says she has no fear as long as she is in the path of duty.

'Helen, poor thing, seems quite forlorn; yet in a year or two she may be fit to keep house for her father, if he does not marry again; and I hardly think he will, for they lived upon but indifferent terms. There was no mutual esteem or confidence between them. She was much discontented with her station in life, and thought herself thrown away; and uncle being a homely, hearty man, and quite plain and

humble in his ideas of life, they did not at all agree. I have promised to go down twice a week in the meantime, until we see if Helen can be trusted with the housekeeping, as her father is anxious for it.'

'I was [entry by my mother] in happy anticipation of the vacation for my little boy, and we were all going to the miller's house, when my husband took his illness. He was to come and see us on Sabbath as usual, or on Saturday if he could get the wages paid by twelve o'clock, as he had good hopes of doing. There was plenty of accommodation in the miller's house. It wanted only one week of the time fixed. Oh! little did I dream that before that week was over I would be a widow, and my poor little boy an orphan. On the Sunday, the last of which notice is taken in this book, we were twice at church, and all was well and comfortable with us.

'He breakfasted with us at five o'clock on Monday morning, and went away on foot. He had to call at a number of places both about money and orders, but he expected to be home to his tea by six or seven o'clock. It was nine o'clock ere I saw him; he had come home three hours before, but was called away to his young master, and detained three hours in his wet clothes. He had walked hard during the whole day, and got wet to the skin when only two miles from home. He was not accustomed to much walking: the fatigue and the wet together were the original cause of his illness. He was perfectly well, as he thought, on Sabbath, although dull and shivery ways, and he thought himself quite well when he went out to his employment on Monday. He got his feet bathed ere he went to bed, and a basin of gruel to put away the shivering. He slept tolerably well, and tried to get up next morning as usual; but he was not able to stand, becoming suddenly sick. At breakfast he could not eat one bit. He felt some difficulty in breathing, and about mid-day complained a little of a pain in his side as he thought. I now took fright, and asked him if I might send for the doctor. "As soon as you please," he said. I was more alarmed at this than anything else, for he did not like to have the doctor if it was possible to dispense with him.

'The doctor bled him at once, and took a great quantity of blood; and when he called in the evening, he took more blood from him, as the pain was still felt, although it was much easier. I had never seen such a quantity of blood taken, and was stupified; but our doctor had a high character, and I shut my eyes to the danger. After this he slept well. He was easy next morning, the pain was almost entirely gone,

and he was much freer from sickness and oppression in his breast, and he felt quite cheerful and happy ; but he kept his bed, because his head was light from loss of blood I suppose ; but he was so thankful that the pain was gone.

‘He continued in this easy and happy state all next day, and fell asleep at night in the same way. He awoke about two A.M., when he grew very restless, and felt the pain in his side as severe as before. I sent again for the doctor, who was with us by six o’clock. After he had looked at James, and felt his pulse, etc., a cloud gathered on his brow, and then he bled him a third time. I had the greatest trouble to keep my feelings within bounds. The pain and the restlessness continued all day, and when the doctor called in the evening he brought the celebrated ——— with him. They consulted together for five minutes, and then said, “The only chance is to take more blood.” I trembled when I heard these words, and then they bled him again, and he fainted. I became useless. I could do nothing. I could not conceal my fears. The doctor was assisted by Mrs Smith, the baker’s wife, whom they knocked down for. He was long in coming round again ; even the doctors thought so.

‘After he had recovered, and was laid comfortable-like, and all gone, he observed me looking earnestly at his pale face. He withdrew his eyes from mine, and shut them without speaking. In a little time afterwards he looked up again with a forced smile on his countenance, which made him look still more piteous. I took his hand : “This is hard work, Mary ; but I feel myself easier now.” I was much moved, but did not speak. He asked me why I was so overcome. I told him it was the sight of his pale face lying there. He fell asleep, and slept for four hours, and awakened much restored, as we thought, but very weak, and his mind wandering a little from time to time ; he had had a large blister upon his breast and side, which was now very uneasy to him. He seemed quite aware of his weak and dangerous state, for his breathing was still oppressive and laborious ; and he continued in this state for a day or two, the pain only returning at intervals, but not so violently as before.

‘On Monday morning his spirits were quite sunk, and I spoke to him several times before I could get an answer ; yet I observed his eyes following me through the house, and he asked several times for little James, who was in one of our kind neighbours’ houses. He was sent for by his father’s desire ; yet, after he was in the room, he did

not say anything either to him or me, but he looked first at one of us and then at the other, and yet he did not speak to us; but he was speaking, for I saw his lips moving. My fears now entirely overwhelmed me, and I called on him with such earnest importunity to speak to us, that he said, "In a little—wait." In a minute he said, "Mary, I am sure I am in a dangerous way, and I am so sorry that I have neglected to do what I should have done; it oppresses me now very much." I do not know what I said, and he spoke again. "Yes, my dear, I am very unhappy at the idea of leaving you so ill provided for. Oh, I wish I had thought of it sooner!" This open avowal that he thought himself dying overcame us both, and I could hardly repeat a word of the conversation we had after. I comforted him as well as I could, and told him not to distress himself about us, for I was sure we were in the hands of a good God, and had many kind friends. It was the bitterness of death indeed. Our neighbours were so kind and thoughtful, I was left little alone. I was quite useless and could do nothing.

'Uncle George now came to see us. He had been four days from home on business. I was not in the room with them, but, from his expressions after he came out, much had passed between them about us. Uncle was so overcome he could not go home, and Helen, wearying for him, and for word about us all, came up after dinner. She was quite astonished at the scene, and seemed to lose self-possession. By-and-by, after a fit of crying, which gave her great relief, and when she heard of our neighbours sitting up, she started up, "Let me sit up a night;" and when she was dissuaded, "Surely you will not refuse to let me sit up a night with my uncle." She would not be denied, and as we saw her so much moved, we agreed. And then she said in her quiet way, "Maybe I may not be of much use, but I'll no fa' asleep, and I can give him anything he wants; and if I need to do it, I can waken you up." In the meantime her father got a coach and went home with her; and she was with us again by ten with her night things, and leaving all right at home. Our kind neighbour, Mrs R——, was to stay up with Helen and the sufferer till midnight; and if all was quiet then, to leave for her own house. And as for me, I was quite done up, and went to bed, and to my own great surprise slept four hours. I dressed and went in. James was in a slumber, and Helen nodding in the chair. I awoke her, and obliged her to go to bed. The sufferer slumbered on without much restlessness till six o'clock. This was a good sleep. Still he was not refreshed, but

quite free from pain, and quite composed, and I became the same from his example.

‘I was so glad, and at once believed he had got the turn of his distress. Oh, how willing I was to believe it! And I got into fine spirits. And when uncle came up after breakfast, I told him my thoughts and hopes; and I rather wondered that he was not as happy as myself. But I did not know that he had seen the doctor as he came along, who told him he was no better, and that his medicines had not produced the effect he expected. I did not know this till long after.

‘We ourselves two had an off-and-on conversation that morning of nearly two hours. He told me what he meant by his regret; viz., that he had intended to join a society that gave their widows ten pounds a year, but that he had delayed from time to time till it was too late. I told him not to vex his mind now, as he was so much better. But he answered me, “For that very reason, as I am now able, I think it is the proper time; and oh, my dear, if it should be God’s will to take me at this time, do not forget who it is that is the Father of the fatherless and the Husband of the widow!” I spoke not, and we both had enough to do suppressing our feelings for some time. He then said, “Take the family Bible that I got from Mr Allworthy, and read the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of St John.” I obeyed, and read it over with a trembling voice, for I was hardly able to speak. At the end of the twenty-sixth verse he said, “Read these two verses again.” And when I said, “Believest thou this?” he spoke: “Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!” He now desired me to leave him for half an hour to himself. On my return I found him quite awake—calm and thoughtful; and he said, rather cheerfully, “Come, Mary, I have had great consolation and peace in my mind since you read that chapter to me; and if God sees fit to remove me at this time, I think I am ready. I have always loved my God and Saviour. I know in whom I have trusted, and He will not fail me.” I was filled with a mixture of sensations; but I could not yet believe that it was to be death. I flattered myself in spite of all probability until Uncle George came in, and his sad appearance gave me a check. During this day the doctor called twice, and Mr Allworthy, junior, also called. The doctor advised that no one should be admitted, as his only chance was in getting quietness.

‘In the afternoon he said, “Mary, I doubt much we are to part for a time; for I feel a sinking of spirit, and a coldness creeping over me.

Where is James?" [I was brought in from the kitchen with Helen, who had stayed all day with us.] Poor little fellow! he had no sense of his father's distress. He was put on a chair at the bedside; his father put his hand on his head, or it was rather myself who did it, for I lifted it on—he did not seem to have any strength left. "God preserve you, my dear James, from all the evil that is in the world, and make you a blessing and a comfort to your mother." He shut his eyes for a considerable time, while James wept because he saw me weeping. Our minister had called two days before, when we were in hope that he was to get better, and he called in this evening about seven o'clock. He had seen the doctor, and he spoke to us in a low voice, so kind like—sometimes to James, sometimes to me. He led our minds to the frailty of man. This was no abiding-place, but a preparation for another and a better world. He spoke of the Saviour's sufferings, and of salvation purchased and made sure to us, as enough to support the sinking soul in passing through the dark valley. In his prayer he greatly surprised me, for he addressed the Almighty so like a child speaking to a father, with such confiding, affectionate earnestness, as if quite sure that all he asked would be fully granted, that although I could not restrain my tears, they were not tears of bitterness, but of relief, as he described the happiness and reunion of those who had been separated by death for a time. He left calmness and resignation behind him. We were long silent. At last I rose, went to my husband's bedside, and took one of his cold hands in both of mine; and I felt as if it would have been a great joy if we had been both going to die. Oh, how strong was the wish! He looked up and said, "Mary, we should be by ourselves a little." And when all were gone he said, "I could not wish to die in a better frame of mind; nothing disturbs me but to see you so overcome. Look up, my dear friend, to our heavenly Father; you have been a faithful friend to me, and may God for ever bless you and keep you till we meet again." I now left the room to please him: he thought I was gone to bed; but I looked in several times, and to my great surprise he fell into a sweet sleep as I thought. I did not know that, although the pain of the inflammation was removed, mortification had begun; worn-out nature, now freed from pain, sank into repose. I was again misled by hope. Our friend Mrs Wilson awoke me at four o'clock, and I went into the room. A great change had taken place; his features were sunk, and how dull and weary were his eyes! He

was able to name me. How cold he was ! I need write no more. He sank by degrees, and at last entered upon his rest as if upon a sleep, nine days after his return from that fatal journey. All our dear friends were with us at the time.

‘From this period until I was left alone after the funeral, with no company but my little boy, all in my memory is one scene of confusion, uncertainty, and darkness. But oh, my friends and neighbours were kind to me ! No lady was ever more kindly treated : everything was done that friendship and sympathy could do for me. I will never be able to repay them ; but they will not lose their reward, for God will remember them.’

‘One long, weary day passed away after another in silence and sadness. That cheerful countenance and voice of kindness no more awake my sad heart. The breakfast and the dinner hours were so welcome, as I heard the news, and his remarks, which flowed from his honest and loving heart. And the evening, too, falls down upon me dead and heavy. At times I do not know what I will do ; and I speak so to myself aloud ! Sometimes I forget, and fancy I hear his step on the stair. But I am past shedding tears now ; I have spent them all. Sighing, sadness, melancholy, are now all that are left to me. May God forgive me for this expression, and teach me to say, “Thy will be done,” and to live for my little boy’s sake. I will struggle to be more cheerful.’

‘I never wearied before, my time flew away so quietly and without notice. Now I rise from my work and look at his watch many times in one hour, especially when it is near the time of James returning from school. I would rather my friends did not call upon me so often as they do. It is very kind of them to do it ; but I am unable to rouse myself up for conversation. Sometimes, I dare say, they are angry at me ; but I hope, in a little time, my sadness may wear off ; and sometimes I think it will never.

‘How very good uncle and Helen are to us ! My heart is oppressed by their kindness. A sincere regard always existed between the two brothers, and I feel the good of it now. A kinder creature than Helen, I am sure, never existed. It never will be in my power to compensate or thank them as I ought ; but when uncle and Helen are more advanced in life, and if they should require of my James, if God spare him, then I hope he will repay all their kindness tenfold, for his own as well as for his mother’s sake.’

'Uncle has taken a cottage, I think chiefly on my account, although he says it is on Helen's. We four are to be there for two whole months. It is a cheerful spot.

'Return much better, but not quite so well as last year. Uncle remonstrates against my hard work, and insists on my taking it easier, and offers me money; but I feel as if I were choking, I am so oppressed by his kindness. I cannot—no, I really cannot—cease from working; it has become an element of my life to me; it is like meat, or drink, or sleep.'

'The dead of the year.—Great pain after eating, be the quantity ever so small.'

'Uncle has sent the doctor to me, much against my will. The medicines have done me good, and I am really happy at it; for, when I began to think that death was approaching, I felt as if it were impossible that I could leave my boy. It was a bitter pang, but how thankful it has made me for the prospect of longer life!'

'I am not worse of late, but very low-spirited. A dream I had has impressed me deeply. I used to laugh at folk with their dreams and nonsense; but this one has sobered me, and I think it my duty to write it down.'

THE DREAM.

'I thought I was in my father's garden at —, where we spent so many happy years. The time seemed about the middle of May, when everything was looking so green, so fresh, so beautiful. The apple-tree blossom was at its best stage, with its beautiful white and red flowers. My father was walking along the north-west wall, where his favourite wall-trees were. He was dressed as if it were the day of rest; his coat and hat well brushed and clean; and the cane with the ivory top in his hand. I think I see him now: his gray, silvery locks, so nicely combed down, gave him quite a respectable and reverend-like appearance, and he was looking quite spruce and cheerful. As I came forward to him, he turned round to me in an animated and happy manner, and held his hand over his eyes a little to shade them from the sun, until he should see who was advancing. "Come awa', lassie," said he; "you never saw my garden looking better, did you? Everything is thriving so well; I am sure you will say James and me deserve great credit for it. Come awa' and help us." At this moment my eyes fell upon James, my dear departed friend,—his coat off, and

a spade in his hand, his countenance glowing with the healthy exercise, and the happy look he always used to bestow on me. This was more than sleep could bear; and while I was trying to reconcile my contending thoughts, sleep went from me, and I awoke to the sad reality of my situation,—my boy sleeping soundly by me, a gusty night of the month of January, the rain now and then rattling against my window.'

'Next Sabbath uncle and Helen were up taking tea with us: their principal errand, no doubt, was to see me, and bear me up in my distress. Uncle went out to call upon an acquaintance, and left us together. Helen had drawn James closely towards her, and was playing with his curly locks as was her usual manner. My dream came freshly into my mind, and looking earnestly at the two thus situated, I could not help my eyes filling with tears, which Helen observed, and so earnestly and affectionately besought me to tell her what oppressed me, that I could not resist it. My heart overflowed, and I told her my apprehensions about myself, and then I told her circumstantially my whole dream. We had consigned James to our neighbour above, that we might get out our quiet, important conversation. In conclusion, I told Helen that when I saw her and James so endearingly attached, I thought it was like an arrangement in providence to make room for my departure, and that she would soon be as a mother to him. I was sorry I had gone so far, for her eyes glanced right and left, and at me, with a wildness of emotion; but suddenly she left me, and bolting herself into the kitchen, remained there for a quarter of an hour, and came out with a very pale, new-washed face. Uncle was absent two hours; and we had much conversation together, in which, although Helen tried to make light of my fears, she showed she participated in them, and every satisfaction my heart could desire she gave me, and I was satisfied. I thought the hand of Providence was manifested in it; and from that time ever, when we sat together, she put her hand in mine in her own kind-hearted way.

'We had finished our conversation by the time that uncle returned; and after a bread-and-cheese supper, they left us with good wishes as usual. Although the good sense of uncle prevented him from noticing our appearance when he returned from his call, yet no sooner was he at home, and had got the parlour-fire stirred up, and himself and Helen comfortably seated by it, than he asked the reason why they had been so dull in his absence. She told him the whole; but in doing so, it

renewed her emotion as at the first. He was evidently affected, but he tried to conceal it, and said there were evils enough in the world without imagining more, that we were too superstitious, and that what we feared might never happen. After this he remained a little time in thought, and then said, "I am sorry to see your aunt in so poor a state of health; but happen what will to her, James shall never want a home while I have one to myself." Helen frankly told me every word of this the next time I went down; and she added, that after her father had said this, he sat nearly half an hour without speaking, the poker all the time in his hand resting on the top of the grate. He then called for the Bible, and after reading as usual, made it bedtime.'

'Uncle has again taken the gardener's cottage. I know it's altogether on my account, but dare not say it; for uncle maintains that he is not so well as he would like to be himself. I see nothing the matter with him; it is one of his grave jokes.'

'We have had a happy summer here, the weather has been so fine ever since 1st July, and it is now near the end of September. I feel much better than I did last year at this time, if my appetite were good; but it is far from that, and I fear the town and the winter coming on; but I will try to be more hopeful, and trust in Him who has provided for me and mine even until now.'

'I am afraid my constitution is failing: all within me feels a kind of sore, and I am growing so weak; the rapid decay of my strength quite alarms me. I believe my friends, too, all entertain the same opinion: they do not say so, but their looks tell me plain enough. Indeed it must be so, for all the nourishment I am able to take would not support an infant. To write in this book is now almost too much for me; but as long as I am able, I will try it.

'It is now the dead of the year. I am very unwell, and my strength and flesh are wasting very fast. I must push a chair before me when I want to cross the room, I am so like to fall. My poor dear little boy! It is painful to me to think of him; but I must try to leave him an advice in writing. I am not able at present.'

'Uncle has sent up his maid to wait upon me, and Helen comes daily. Oh, thanks to them, and thanks be to God for all His goodness!'

'MY DEAR SON,—You will read this when I am at rest from all the cares and troubles of life, and laid beside your father.

‘Never destroy this book, but read it through once a year, and read it on a Sabbath-day or a Fast-day, when you have time to think. You will find much in it to encourage you in the fear and love of God, and to lead a virtuous life.

‘The box of letters of your father’s and mine keep carefully. They are what will show you virtuous happiness as far as can be enjoyed in this life. If ever you marry, James, be sure it is with one who sincerely loves God, and is of a good family, and has a good temper; but take great time to make up your mind. I cannot write more at present.

‘Oh, my dear James, follow always after truth. God is truth; and of the blessed Saviour it is written, “He did no sin, neither was guile found in His lips;” and look back to the example of your father, who was so much honoured and loved by all who knew him.

‘My strength fails me so fast I can scarcely hold my pen.

‘Surely you will never forget the kindness of your uncle and Helen. Be sure to be attentive and obedient, and grateful to them at all times; and when you grow up, do not forget it; and if ever it be in your power to repay their kindness, I am sure you will exert yourself to do it. Oh, what a relief it is to my mind to think that God has raised up such friends to us to take care of you when I am gone!

‘Farewell, James, my dear only surviving child! It is hard to part thus, but God wills it, and may His will be done! May He ever guard you and keep you in the right way! Oh, my son, so walk that we may all meet again at the right hand of the Judge, when time shall be no more. I write my name for the last time here below, as your truly affectionate mother,

MARY MEETWELL.’

From the last date entered in the commonplace-book, she lingered seven weeks in very considerable pain, when death put an end to all her troubles and sorrows, and she entered into that rest which she had so long and so ardently desired. I was for two or three weeks at Leith ere this took place, coming up with Helen once every two days on a visit to my dying mother. I thought nothing about what was going on, because I was quite well satisfied with the change. I got much more freedom. One day in our progress to Edinburgh we met a neighbour of my mother’s, who had sat up with her part of the preceding night. In answer to Helen’s inquiries, she said she did not think Mrs Meetwell would have put over the night, and that she could

not live the week out, or else she was far mistaken. Strange, that although I was at that time ten years of age and had a remembrance of father's death, and had witnessed my mother's deep distress and uncle and Helen's sad attention, with the many and friendly visits of the neighbours,—although I heard the pitying expressions that were uttered in regard to myself, and that the doctor visited her twice every day, and even saw my dear mother's agitation every time she shook hands with me when leaving her,—although I was eye and ear witness to all this, yet I never once thought that my mother was to die until this morning that this neighbour met us. The plain, homely remark of this woman now, for the first time, went directly home to my heart, and brought a feeling of sickness and confusion of mind, with an undefined apprehension over me, which remained oppressing me till her death three days after.

I was present at the coffining. I saw her swathed remains lifted out of the bed by two bearers. The shape of the body shocked me; horror and fear overpowered me; and now, at a distance of three-score years, it is one of the most vivid and painful impressions memory retains. I think it was wrong to have me there, considering my age.

The day fixed upon for the funeral having arrived, we were driven up in a hackney coach about two hours before the time fixed for the removal of the coffin. My new dress and the many presents I received, and the attention shown me by all, quite absorbed all my attention, and prevented my mind from recurring to my loss; nor did I feel much when the grave was closed over the remains of my beloved mother; a few tears of surprise and transient grief found their way, as for one minute a glimpse of my forlorn state came into my thoughts.

The dinner, which was prepared for a few friends in the house of mourning, and the tea, to which, according to custom, all our kind and attentive female friends were invited as an acknowledgment for their goodness, filled up the whole day; and after locking up all the doors of the now lonely dwelling-house, we returned home in a coach as in the morning.

Next day, Sunday, a fine dry frosty day, we all walked up to Edinburgh, and occupied the seat in the church which my father and mother had so long gone to, and brought away her books. Uncle had asked two intimate friends of my father's to dinner; and after it was over,

I stole away to a back court where a few boys of my acquaintance used to assemble. Among them I soon forgot my situation, and mingled in their pastime, until one of the boys told some story which made them all burst out into a loud laugh, in which I heartily joined. But at this moment I noticed my black clothes, and a keen sense of the impropriety of my conduct, and the great loss I had sustained, came with such a force into my mind, that I abruptly left my company and hurried home, when a fit of crying of nearly two hours' duration ensued, and my friends were distressed about me until I became composed.

I felt completely chilled when I got into the house and saw all the furniture displaced and out of its usual arrangement. My mind seemed to open in a way I never felt before. I was able to look back on the past, and forward to the future. There was the chair in which my distressed parent had sat in pain and suffering so lately. All was now over. The bed upon which she breathed her last. The same bed upon which I had so often thrown myself in a sulky humour when I was refused what I wanted, and which notwithstanding I was determined to have,—perhaps only a penny, or something of similar importance. I recalled now so vividly her sweet-toned voice of gentle remonstrance and my dogged pertinacity. I felt that I had been cruel and unfeeling, and her image rose up before me in all her tenderness, kindness, and forbearance; and if I could only now have had an opportunity of making my peace—making some amends; but no—too late, too late, added anguish to my repentance. She is gone beyond my recall—the door was shut. All the petty acts of disobedience now rose up in my mind, trooping one after the other, and these bitter thoughts haunted me for months.

I longed, but in vain, to put my head in her lap, and feel once more her soft hands stroking down my hair. I remembered with thrilling delight that time when I had been a month away from home, when I stole in upon her so quietly as to give her quite a surprise; and, young as I was, my astonishment at her emotions of joy,—how she embraced me and kissed me again and again, and with the tear in her eye looked so happy.

CHAPTER III.

BOYHOOD—SCHOOL PRANKS AND PASTIMES.

I NOW went to the school; it might have been called a private one, for Mr Forward was all in all, and amenable to none. He rented the schoolroom, which was twenty by twenty-two feet in size. The rent was eight pounds. It had two windows on one side. In the centre of this room, which was not above ten feet high, four tables—each eight feet long by two feet broad—formed a parallelogram of table, when placed together, sixteen feet long and four feet wide; round this on deal seats we were arranged,—a very narrow space for each pupil to learn his lessons, do his arithmetic, or write his copy. About ten girls sat on a similar seat in a dark corner. These, with forty boys, made up the average attendance at Mr Forward's school. It did not yield him a great revenue, for the quarterly payments did not average above five shillings each, the sum my uncle paid for me. Fifty pupils would therefore yield fifty pounds, or forty-two pounds after paying the rent out of it. Our school hours were ten to twelve A.M., and two to four P.M.—short if not sweet. The two windows, except in very cold weather, were always down at the top and up at the bottom. Mr Forward was the son of a man in very humble life, who had made a trifle, and wished to have his son made a minister. This attempt utterly broke down, for our teacher had no dignity, or temper, or suavity of manner. The evidence that he was a street brought-up lad broke out so frequently in coarse and even dirty language, that his scholars had no respect for him. In stature he was five and a half feet high, of a dark complexion, and firmly built; walked fast on the street; delivered his opinion at all times in a loud, brief, confident tone. In school he spoke in the drill-sergeant style. His dress was a black coat and vest, olive velveteen shorts, with gray stockings, which showed a well-formed leg. His outward appearance was much softened by a clear white frill, which was conspicuous by his open vest; and black spats or short gaiters gave a smartish finish to the whole under man. He was thought by some to be a clever man, but I was no judge. However, he wrote very well, as I see from my name, written by him, on a Bible which lies by me to this day. He had always a jug of fresh

cold water on his desk, of which he took mouthfuls from time to time. Perhaps loud speaking, and speaking constantly, created this thirst. He was excessively restless, and would whirl his long taws round and round so rapidly that the boys kept carefully out of the way.

Mr Forward professed to teach reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, and Latin; no geography or history. The Collection, the Testament, and Lindley Murray's one shilling grammar, were all, except an initiating book for the children, and our small arithmetic. My two years with him were almost thrown away. There was no discriminating surveillance. We did our copy daily, and attended our classes each in his place. The best scholar—and a poor best he often proved—was dux. For my own part, I remember I was one whole week with the same half-defaced account on my slate, and no one called me in question. The master did all the quill-pen making and mending, and this was no slight affair for forty pupils. My uncle one day, purely by chance, asked me, 'Weel, Jamie, what are you doing at school?' I was so surprised and startled that it roused me to some exertion for a week, in case the question might have been repeated, but it was not. I always kept well up in my class, having a good ear for spelling. As to grammar, if our book, the smallest of its kind, could have taught us, we might have learnt; but then we did nothing but pretend to learn rules. I feel almost ashamed to write of Mr Forward as I am doing. No one helped our poor master with his pen-making, or any other part of his duty. How could one unassisted man, in four hours daily, teach fifty pupils?

I never experienced any harsh treatment at his hands. There was a reason for this. My uncle, in his own kind way, thought to make him attentive to me by asking him to tea now and then; and on these occasions one pound of beefsteak was always cooked for his special use. No doubt he often supped thin kail at home, for he was a married man,—and the beefsteak was of course a godsend. He did not seem to know or to care for gaining the affections of his pupils. He was addicted to flogging, and it was sometimes painful to witness the scenes which took place. I remember one poor, stupid, deaf woman came every Monday morning to complain of her son having spent Saturday afternoon and Sunday in an improper manner, and of other faults. These complaints the master suffered to accumulate until he thought the lad deserved punishment; and as he was a stout fellow and refractory, he spoke privately to two of the oldest lads to

remain and assist him with the culprit after the other scholars were away. The master then called the lad, and the poor fellow went up with unpleasant anticipations to face the enemy. Then 'you may go, boys,' sent us all a-scampering. The coast being now clear, the charges against poor 'Sivey' were brought forward; and there being no doubt of his guilt, he was seized and put on a form on his face. In this position, while one kept him down by the shoulders and another secured his legs, the master undid the buttons, and with his cat of knotted cords inflicted a serious and degrading punishment; after which, poor 'Sivey' was allowed to button up, and the master appeased his own conscience by a long moral lecture and a drink of water. Immediately after this, the incorrigible 'Sivey' would play the truant, nor would he return to school till his mother had extorted from the master a promise, on his 'word of honour,' that he would not whip him again. The outcast creature would then come sneaking kindly to him or assisted him. This routine was often enacted,—crime, complaint, punishment, and playing truant,—till the lad, in disgust and despair, offered himself to the press-gang; and as his whole bent was to be about boats and ships, he was accepted. Some seven years afterwards we heard that Sivey had behaved gallantly in a naval engagement, and had been noticed by the captain of his ship.

A favourite punishment with our superior was to compel any of the boys who offended him to stand in the middle of the floor, and undo his trousers until they fell at his feet. In this situation he was forced to stand some time, until he made an apology to the master's satisfaction. If not, the master tucked up his shirt all round, rendering him perfectly bare, and flogged him. If he cried out lamentably, he was soon excused; but if he happened to be a boy of resolution, the master's anger rose proportionally, and he got twice as much. This was a common fault with teachers at that time, and I suspect even now. I knew a brave boy, not many years ago, who, after having his palms well warmed without audible complaint, cast a triumphant look towards his schoolfellows. The master caught it, and seizing him again, bellowed out, 'You'll not cry, will you not? we'll see about that;' and he succeeded.

But in reference further to the system of shameful exposure, I remember that during such a scene the girls held their books before their faces, or drew their gown-tails over their heads; and when

forced to stand up immediately afterwards to their class, their cheeks and their books were both wet. I had a perfect horror of this shameful punishment; and upon one occasion, when half of the scholars played truant, and I amongst them, I was haunted by a fear of its infliction. I thought I might be selected for an example. My plan was, when called upon, to pretend to be busy about my buttons, but suddenly to draw a long knife out of my breast, and threaten any one who should offer to stop me from flying out of school. I carried the knife to school, but did not require to use it or practise my evolutions; for a general amnesty was proclaimed, with a warning for the future.

I remember also that our teacher had a custom, when any young man showed his slate for examination, to cross it more than once or twice with his slate-pen, as if he had a pleasure in doing so, and then hand it back without telling the lad where the error lay. I must say this was very provoking. One stout fellow of seventeen, not being well grounded in scholarship, left his business to mend his arithmetic, etc., with Mr Forward. On one occasion he showed his slate. Mr Forward crossed it with three crosses, and said, 'Here, Donald.' Enraged at the three crosses, and some bad language, the lad replied, hurling back his foul language on himself. Thus bearded in his den, Mr Forward sprang at the lad like a tiger; but he stood his ground, for he was a broad-shouldered fellow; and while the master tried in vain to force him down, the lad upset all the four tables in grand confusion, and taking his books, slate, and hat, walked out of the school, leaving our master quite mortified and out of breath, his vest flying loose, and his face and eyes inflamed with rage. This is no caricature; though it occurred half a century ago, I can recall every circumstance as well as if it had happened yesterday.

Mr Forward nevertheless was, as far as I know, a good son, husband, and father, and, I may add, a sober and industrious man, but sadly unfitted for the place he filled as a teacher. Nor did he forget religion among his duties, for he gave us short addresses on religious subjects on the Saturdays. They were heard with impatience, for the desire to be off and at play was uppermost at the time. The saying, 'If he will not make a minister, he will make a good dominie or schoolmaster,' is a great mistake indeed. We need hardly remark, in our day, that a schoolmaster, to be effective, requires to be a lover of learning, a lover of youth; of a kind, forbearing disposition, and a man of varied know-

ledge. The profound questions often put by a child may teach us what is required of a schoolmaster.

Mr Forward at length gave up his schoolroom ; and, as it was the most convenient for me, I was entered a pupil with his successor. He charged higher fees, and had not half the number of pupils. He had a corner table for the gentle chaps, four or six in number, who paid him highly. I believe he was a profound scholar. His arithmetic was all from a manuscript book of his own composing. I must call him Mr Worthy, for no name could more fitly designate this excellent man. If ever I was near a pious, God-fearing, humble Christian, it was Mr Worthy. He was a large, full-grown man of fifty years ; a kind, full, colourless, benevolent face, set off by a sprinkling of gray hairs ; black coat and black vest buttoned up to the chin ; a white neckcloth ; priest-gray short breeches, and stockings to match. His school was quietness and order. I can never forget the impetus given to my mind by this excellent man. When I went up to him with any difficulty, he kindly bent his head a little to one side, listened attentively, and in soft, clear words enlightened me. But for the fifteen months I was with him I would have been an absolute dunce. Enthusiastically fond of learning, he could ill bear with habitual idlers ; and when, time after time, he found the marks of careless laziness in the exercises presented to him, his temper would forsake him, and, by a sudden impulse, he would get the pupil's head between his two open palms, and give such slaps, right and left, right and left, right and left, till I am sure his head rang for ten minutes after ; and then Mr Worthy would draw his breath, and look so distressed, as if he had forgotten and degraded himself. Any incorrigible pupil was quietly told not to come back. How beautiful is religion in a true believer ! When he stood up to pray, all was respectful silence ; in a voice in which reverence and love to God were blended, from his full heart he poured forth his prayer of love to God and love to man. He was one whom I would have chosen to educate a darling son. I would have desired his prayers at my deathbed. I may indeed safely question very much if there can be a greater blessing conferred on a district than a teacher like this, so calculated by his attainments, and so fitted by his goodwill, to allure the young to virtue ; or, on the other hand, a greater curse than such as poor Mr Forward, who hardens his pupils by oppression, and accustoms them to coarse and improper language. Nor can I doubt that a teacher like Mr Worthy, of all men living, must enjoy the most glorious retrospect in old age.

Two years, or nearly so, after my mother's death, when the vivid impression of that event had faded from my recollection, I had a dream which filled my mind afresh with her image; and to this hour it gives me true delight to call the beautiful vision to mind. There is a pleasant green common on which I had frequently walked with her, when we could spare as much time as walk so far. It was then a quiet, rather lonely place, of an oval form, with an unequal surface; plain, smooth green spots here, and tufts of whins there; and one side of it was bounded by the sea. I imagined myself standing at the east extremity of this spot, gazing with delight on the soft, glowing appearance of an unclouded sky, a few minutes after sunset. Suddenly I perceived a form at the opposite end of the green, between me and the clear softened atmosphere, which I at once recognised as that of my dear mother, approaching silently as if borne on a low but swift-sailing cloud. The outline of her figure was transparent and silvery, as if the soft, sweet light of the hour shone through it. There was a calm on her cheek so delicate and pure, and a light in her eye so serene and full of happiness, as at once gave me the idea that I saw one of the happy blessed spirits, upon whose countenance heaven and immortality seemed written. My whole soul was expanded with the most delightful emotion, as I looked on the beloved being so changed, yet the same. Our souls seemed for an instant to mingle together. I thought I felt the warmth of her embrace; but in one moment the sweet vision had disappeared, leaving me in a state of lonely disappointment, the chill air and the increasing darkness warning me to turn my steps home. I hailed this vision, as I may call it, with sincere welcome and reverence, as being the direct warning of a heavenly power, intimating to me that, if I walked in the Christian footsteps of my dear parent, in due time I should join her in glory. I resolved to obey. How earnestly have I ever since hoped that I might again see or feel such another beautiful sensation! But I never did, and have lost hope of it now for ever.

I do not think I am or at any period of my life have ever been superstitious, yet I never scoff at the avowal of supernatural impressions by others; for I have heard those whom I esteem as sterling characters, sincere and honest and shrewd, avow their belief in, and actual experience of, such instances of mysterious events; and although I could not receive such narratives like those which my reason could comprehend and admit, yet, on account of the established character of

my informant for honest veracity and a plain straightforward way of speaking, I was forced to allow that they might be true, and in some sense to give credit to them. I presume to think that a degree of longing after immortality is part of the character in every human being. In some whom we see so stupidly constituted by nature and unenlightened by mental cultivation, or the benefits of education, as hardly to be one step above the brutes that perish, we perhaps cannot see the glimmerings of this principle, although it may exist for all that; and in place of these individuals being destitute of the power of thinking on such subjects as immortality, they may only be unable to impart it to us so as we can perceive its existence. But in the thoughtful and well educated and studious, how brightly and warmly does this principle continue to operate from the moment reason begins to open up the faculties of youthful minds! and through all the vicissitudes of a long and chequered existence, and even accompanying us constantly to the last hour of life, this principle is ever active, ever stimulating our reason and imagination to endeavour, by the utmost exertion, to realize some solid foundation whereon to rest, and be able to say, 'Take comfort, my soul, for thou art sure of eternal life.' Sure! Alas, after a lifetime spent in the vain attempt, we must at last give up the certainty of such a glorious continuation of our being for a 'hope,'—a wavering, cold, and comfortless hope,—clouded at one time almost to entire obscurity, at others beaming forth with renewed lustre.

It is in relation to this dream I had of the reappearance of the glorified spirit of my mother, that I have made these remarks. At the time it happened it was a source of hope and joy. Through life I have ever recalled it with satisfaction, and I will never cease to regard it as of divine origin, and to thank God for it; and far more to thank the Almighty that we have a more sure foundation on which to build our hopes,—a revelation which is the complement of our reason, and the opportunity of our faith,—even the resurrection of the Saviour, who became the first-fruits of them who slept. Young as I was at the time, I had even then begun to exercise my faculty in thinking on this momentous subject, and which has continued to occupy my mind very frequently up to the present hour.

But now, leaving all these grave subjects, it is high time that I notice how I was affected by my change of habits from my mother's house to my uncle's. In a few words, I was emancipated. I became my own master. But little of my time was occupied at school, and I

did not attempt to learn anything out of it. My uncle was a good, easy man, and paying for my books and school-fees satisfied him that he had done his duty. I easily managed Helen, who was always willing to believe the very best of everybody and everything. I was now a boy among the boys of the school and of the street. I got a grand introduction to the favourable notice of my comrades. One of my uncle's sons had made a smack, an exact model of our best Leith smacks, which were then famous almost over the world for their speed and safety, and forcing passages in the teeth of contrary winds. This smack was two feet long, rigged with mainsail, jib, and foresail, and so truly fashioned and well finished every way that this tiny craft sailed most beautifully. She was admirably balanced by a lead keel. Although she had only these three sails, she was rigged with topmast, and sported the man-of-war pennant. The boys of the street urged me to get her, and to see how she would sail; and, by connivance, I succeeded so often, that in a very short time 'The Eagle of Leith' was considered my own; and I was courted by the boys for leave to accompany me when I was to sail the 'Eagle.'

It was a busy summer with us: we were seized with a mania for bathing; and to suit the proper time of the tide we would be at it at six o'clock in the morning, or six or seven in the evening; and to bathe several times a day was no wonder. That summer we learned to swim by the dozen; we held up each other's heads, and had such fun when one swallowed a mouthful of salt water. My 'Eagle' led me into various scrapes. It was very unsatisfactory to sail her along the margin of the sea, where the waves made her bob as they rolled in upon the sand; so sometimes one of the boys, by influence, would get a ship's boat with two oars, or perhaps only one as a sculler, if he could not do better. While we moved along, the 'Eagle' sailed about in all its glory; nor was this altogether so vain a thing, for many people looked on with pleasure, she was so pretty a little craft. For a freak, I had taken my ship with us to bathe: it was a spring-tide, and both wind and tide were one way. By this time I was a fair swimmer, but had not been much out of my depth. I was swimming easily after my vessel, which was going, as well as myself, at a great rate. I gave a look over my shoulder, and was alarmed at my distance from the shore. I dropped to feel the bottom; down I went ever so far, and rose to the surface in a fright. I swam towards the edge of the current, and tried to keep my composure; and when I thought I was safe, I dropped

again, plump over head, but I struck the ground with my feet, and soon gained safe footing. But my 'Eagle' had vanished; ships and boats were in motion in all directions, and all-around had had their attention concentrated on me, as I was evidently in danger; but the 'Eagle' had run away at the rate of four miles an hour, and was soon lost in the distance—lost to me for ever. We never could get a trace of her, and fixed all our hatred and suspicions on a Dutchman, who went out with the first water from the harbour.

We indeed spent much time about the ships in the harbour, and at meal-hours trying feats in the rigging, when a rope's end frequently set us a-scampering. We delighted to get hold of ship biscuit, and were not over particular to make sure if the lads who gave them away had a perfect right to do so or not; but I remember how sweet we thought them. At that time of life nothing comes amiss to the youthful stomach: a turnip the size of two fists, a jolly carrot, half-a-dozen of apples or pears, all go down, and cause no uneasy sensations. Fishing with hand-lines on the sands in the incoming tide, at those places where any fresh water runs into the sea, and often to a late hour we would stay for worthless flounders, eels, and such like. Fishing with rods, too, was a luxury; sitting, with our legs hanging over the pier, at favourite spots in the harbour; sometimes a wrangle for a favourite position. The small coal-fish, generally called podlies, were here taken easily; often 'A pair! a pair!' that is, one on each hook. As the season grew later, these podlies grew larger. On a morning in September, at five o'clock, by moonlight, there was I alone at a favourite spot. Not a moment elapsed ere a rug at my line electrified me. The fish seemed immoderately hungry, or else they could not discriminate in moonlight; for as fast as I could supply my hooks with mud-worms and throw the line, the fish took them. In two hours I had a heavy string of five dozen of the largest; and, trembling with the frosty air of the morning, I reached home, proud of my prize, by seven o'clock. He was a proud fellow who had a white horsehair line, which we plaited ourselves; but how to get the hair was the great question. We watched the country carts, and where there was a white horse with a long tail we were sure to try. Stealing towards it, we would get hold of a very few hairs, and a smart pull, or tit as we called it, made them ours. Sometimes the horse would raise his foot, sometimes start forward, and sometimes the ploughman's whip was across our shoulders, ere we were aware. It was a most objectionable proceeding, but we

braved all dangers. It was only by stealth I could go barefooted in the warm weather. We took to the links, and a game on the green 'barefit' was delicious: to run, to shout, to jump, was then enjoyment. The more noise the more enjoyment in youth, while the rustling of a newspaper disturbs the old and nervous.

Our winter amusements were different; about stables, and hay-lofts, and empty cellars, when we could get one, there we had our theatricals. Our scene was one or two mats from tea-chests, which divided the actors from the spectators. An oblong square hole was cut out and filled with oiled paper, and on and across this oiled paper our characters were made to walk with appropriate words; pasteboard figures of men and women; grotesque enough soldiers, sailors, etc.; a wire attached made no shadow, and so they were moved along by the hand, the candle being behind the figures, and the spectators outside in darkness. Really, now, when I think of it, it was very good fun; but it never paid; we always fell short of funds.

I regret to say that we were unkind to old women and old men who had any peculiarity about them, or were of short temper,—that is, if we could trick or annoy them with impunity, knocking at their doors and windows, filling their lobbies with smoke from a smoking horn made from an old kail or cabbage stalk, sham messages into shops—in fact, impudence and cruelty. The unfeeling treatment by boys of poor friendless dogs and cats is too disgusting to be more than alluded to, and I turn with regret to still another page. Those who had pigeons or rabbits very often got food for them without the consent of the owners. The sweepings of granary stairs, and sometimes a capful of the pure when doors were open; the plunder of cabbage gardens when it was dark, etc. About 'The King George birthday,' what exertions we used to get pistols, and gunpowder, and squibs, and crackers, and wood and coals for our bonfire! and really the people supported us well in this, for we got many pennies and a few six-pences, sometimes even a shilling. We thought this was a meritorious work.

Swearing was common; so was lying and very coarse language; yet amongst us it was, as is said, 'Honour among thieves,'—that is, as comrades and schoolfellows, we were clannish and true to one another. I shall not pursue this subject further. I was in a bad school.

Lax as my uncle was in general, he had one inflexible rule: 'James must not be out after it's dark.' This rule he never relaxed, although

I often evaded it. But for this rule, I cannot say how far I might have been drawn into positive crime. My uncle was frequently out in the evenings; Helen I could always take in my own hand, and I studied always to be home before he returned; but to be out in dark winter nights till eight or nine o'clock was very dangerous. Wanton mischief had such a zest, it was fascinating; witness to lie down on your hands and knees in a dark passage till some one fell over you, then rise and run, and boast of the matter among the rest of the fellows, who would not betray you. Of this we were confident. Let no one suppose that I mention these circumstances as finding pleasure in the relation. I do not; it is with reluctance I narrate them, and only because I have pledged myself to speak the truth of myself, as sincerely as I can, otherwise the moral lesson of my life would fall pointless. I was never fit to be a ringleader, not even a stanch follower, in these actions bordering on crime and abounding in mischief. I was neither bold nor cunning; I was timid, conscientious, and inoffensive; and, as I was a little better off at home than most of the boys, I had some influence amongst them.

I do believe the strict and reverential manner in which we observed the Sabbath tended greatly to keep alive in my breast the excellent lessons I had received. We had our reading immediately after breakfast, and dinner between sermons. In winter a single turn down the pier, by way of taking the air, after the afternoon church, and then home for the evening. I had my task allotted me; part of a chapter or psalm to commit to memory. I fulfilled this part of my duty so well that I got praise for it, and Helen rewarded me for it. In summer we had a walk all together of two or three miles, always returning home by sunset, and then we spent the remainder of the evening at our books.

About this time, young as I was, I saw clearly that Helen was distressed in some way about her father, which it was a long time ere I fully comprehended. To make it short, I must make it narrative. In his youth and early manhood he had been active, frank, shrewd, and rather generous; and having then a profitable trade, and a steady class of customers, he made money, and at one time was to a certainty worth fifteen hundred pounds. He had a very good property, in part of which he lived, worth at least one thousand pounds; for he drew fifty-six pounds of rent for what he had let out to tenants. His own house was worth twenty pounds. His bank-book showed a sum at

his credit varying from three hundred to one thousand pounds, according to the time of year; but he owed pretty largely. (All who are in good credit owe considerably, because nobody doubts them, especially if they be of easy habits themselves.) He was never avaricious. Had he loved to accumulate money, he might have been worth double or treble that amount; but having a competence, he grew easy and lazy, and a year or two before his wife died, he allowed himself to become principal dignitary of the corporation to which he belonged. Besides this, he got entangled in the management of a friendly society and a masonic lodge. Then the demands upon his time now became pretty numerous. He possessed an excellent judgment in ordinary matters, was a cheerful companion, had an hour to spare for any business to which he might be called, and had always money in his pocket. The dinner and supper parties to which he was invited became by far too numerous, and the more so as his sense of honour compelled him to give return parties; but he could not do so in his own house, and of course resorted to an inn.

Helen saw and felt this long before I had formed the least notion of it. Perhaps my mother had told her her fears of my uncle's love of conviviality. Its effect now was, that in place of coming home after closing up, and getting his bit of fish and glass of ale or toddy, then reading the chapter, and whiling away a comfortable hour at his own fireside, it came to pass that not more than two nights out of the six was he at home at his ordinary time, and then he had had his ale ere he came, and was sleepy and no company. If he had been only at a dinner-party at an early hour, as sometimes happened, he would come home quietly, for he was very sensitive, and make for his bed. When going out from tea, Helen would say in her most placable tone, 'I'll have your haddock ready at nine o'clock.' 'Very well;' and he would come. But by-and-by he said, 'How can I tell you? It depends upon who comes in, and business must be attended to;' and he was impatient of any question or hint which required him to make a promise. Ultimately he was allowed to come and go as he pleased. Helen persevered in reading the chapter, as arranged between her and my mother; but ultimately it was discontinued. The Sabbath, however, was kept as usual.

He was now a man of fifty years, of a hale constitution; spent at least an hour before breakfast among his workpeople, of whom, in all, he employed from six to eight hands; attended his saleroom all the

forenoon, and was a very good salesman. He got good fair prices; for opposition was not so keen in those days. He had a considerable number of acquaintances whom he called friends, but who often cost him too dear. There was a way of getting the soft side of him, and it became rather too well known. It was necessary that the applicant should be a person of fair character; for with my uncle this was then indispensable. The first step was to borrow thirty or forty pounds, as if to meet some unexpected emergency, naming one week as the term of repayment; next to pay it within the time; and as it was too short a period to calculate interest, which would not have been accepted, oysters and gin in the evening would be taken instead; and on these occasions the borrower made himself as agreeable to the lender, by conversation and flattery, as far as he durst venture. This would be repeated several times. In the end, the borrower would hint, and he would not tell it to every one, that his business was a capital one, and that he could double his profits if he could buy 'cash;' and then he would throw himself on my uncle for his advice, as a man of great experience, and so forth.

The result of all this was, that he put his name to one cash-credit in his own banker's, and engaged himself in accommodation bills with one or two more. A baker, whose wife had once been a servant with us, got him to sign an order for credit of six sacks of flour; he changed it to sixteen, and a lawsuit ensued, the expense of which was more than the price of the flour twice over, for it was appealed, and my uncle lost. At the time of which I write, much business was transacted in the tavern; indeed you were apt to be called shabby if, when a customer settled his account, he was allowed to go away dry-mouthed. As to flattery, I would like to see the man or woman to whom it is not acceptable, especially if the individual administering it is respectable, in which case it has a wonderful effect. I may almost say none are wholly proof against this sweet unction. In one disastrous year all these obligations came against him. The gross amount of dead loss was five hundred and sixty pounds; and the whole dividends received did not amount to five shillings per pound, paid at remote periods.

In one respect my uncle was well off. He had taken a lad as apprentice, who about the end of his first year got a hurt of his arm, and was unable to do his work as formerly. His parents were poor people, and he was taken to clean and assist in the saleroom and to

run errands. Jamie Cautious quite identified himself with my uncle's affairs and became very handy. At this time he had been six years with him, and he could attend to any customer, in my uncle's absence, almost as well as himself. He was a quiet, pleasant, patient creature, and showed the goods with so many judicious yet unobtrusive remarks that every one was pleased with him. He wrote pretty well; indeed he might be called my uncle's factotum, he was so perfectly trustworthy. Yet I am not sure if he was an unmixed good to my uncle, who gradually got into the easy confidence that Jamie would let nothing go wrong. However, close attendance on uncle's part would now have been an intolerable burden; so Jamie was become quite a necessity to him. Jamie's wages were at the time ten shillings a week, and he was so humble in his ideas that he was well pleased.

CHAPTER IV.

SELF-TRAINING—NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

THE losses my uncle had sustained, Helen's concern about him, and the confidence she placed in me, all put together, tended to awake my mind from its sloth, and restore it to the grave and thoughtful state which was natural to me. And when Mr Forward left, and Mr Worthy filled his place, I seemed to have gone into another world altogether. I owed much to Mr Worthy. 'James,' he would say, 'it's not that I expect you to work all the questions I have given you in school: of course you take your slate home?' Then, seeing a negative in my face, he would add, 'Take it home, and let me see what you can do.' Such kind words of encouragement went direct to my best feelings; and I did take home my slate. Helen could do little to assist me; but she had any amount of patience, and heard me again and again. Mr Worthy was pleased with me.

When my father's books and my uncle's were thrown into one library, it consisted of:—

One folio copy of Flavius Josephus.

Rollin's Ancient History.

Paradise Lost.

Bunyan's Works—the fullest copy I ever saw, comprising *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War*, *Grace Abounding*, *The Barren Fig-Tree*, *Life and Death of Mr Badman*, etc., in six well-bound volumes.

Thomson's Seasons.

Flavel's Works, a full copy, like Bunyan's.

Brown's Bible Dictionary.

Cook's Voyages.

Set of Magazines, Sermons, etc.

But my uncle was also a subscriber to the Public Library, and Helen and I ventured on a novel. The first, I think, was 'Camilla ; or, A Picture of Youth.' It suited us well, this novel-reading ; and we plunged into it with ardour, so that it gave us little concern although my uncle did stop out. The fascination was perfect : we ran over the whole catalogue, and whatever attracted us by the novelty of its title we got, devouring the *Arabian Nights*, *Ned Evans*, *Humphrey Clinker*, and many others.

The short time I was with Mr Worthy did me much good. Every exercise he gave me, he took care I should thoroughly understand ; and all that was manly in me was thus awakened. I inclined to follow the same business as my uncle was engaged in, but not to begin at the mechanical part, as he had done. I was now about fourteen years of age, and I and my friends thought me a very good scholar. I found out what a poor superficial creature I was afterwards. My uncle thought I would learn better with a neutral person than I would in his shop, which he was quite aware was not a regularly conducted establishment. Perhaps he thought I would be more strictly looked after. No doubt he saw me using too much freedom with Jamie Cautious ; for he had scolded him, and Helen too, for indulging me too much. It so happened that an old gentleman, a crony of my uncle's, gave us a forenoon call in autumn ; and while taking his gin and water, I made my appearance. This old gentleman had a son in the same line as my uncle ; only he was entirely in the wholesale way, and had the reputation of being a master of his business, and very clever. He thought that his son was in want of an apprentice, and that I might suit him. My copy-book was produced, and approved ; and in the course of a week I was placed behind Mr Stately's counter, in pretty extensive premises near the foot of Leith Walk. There was a lad in the shop just coming out of his apprenticeship, and he was leaving. I

believe he was not asked to stay. He had a native impudence about him which spurted forth on all occasions ; now and then at my expense, in conversations with the porter and a junior brother of Mr Stately, who paid us almost daily visits. All this I never minded. His time wore away, and he left. Now I had to come forward to the front rank. In Mr Stately's absence I was his representative ! Our porter was a ragged-looking fellow, but strong and hardy, and of a kindly heart, when he could forego his banter. It was seldom he could.

I was so anxious to do my duty to Mr Stately that I never exceeded half an hour to meals ; and as I did this more conscientiously in his absence, he formed a favourable opinion of me, especially as he saw no boys coming after me ; and at times he even bestowed a little praise upon me. I remember well how sweet it was. Those who find fault and scold, or even maintain a cold, distant manner towards their servants, do not know how to make them affectionate and faithful. Certain it is, you never will be served so well as by those whose affections you have engaged by kind and judicious treatment. Blame reluctantly and quietly, and give a little cheerful praise when there is room for it. One day, as he was going out, he handed me an invoice, desiring me to copy it in before he came back, which would be in two hours. I looked at it with dismay. I had to calculate weights and measures, and reduce one kind of money into another, ere I could say it was correct or mark it 'Exd.,' as I was desired to do. It filled a page and a half of long paper ; but there was no help. I must try, and I did ; but what a piece of work I made of it ! It was full of erasures, blots, and interlineations. I was in despair when I looked at it ; and had it not been a handsomely bound book, I would, without hesitation, have cut out the leaf. I thought I would run away, and probably I might have done so, had not Mr Stately come in at the moment. On taking a peep at the book he drew a breath through his teeth, and exclaimed, 'James ! James ! what on earth—' and fixing his eyes upon me, he saw my dismal face, almost at the point, for sheer vexation, of crying. Truly I was humbled. Day after day I looked at the hateful performance ; and seven years after, when on a visit from Glasgow, I stole in and got a sight of it. The book was quickly shut again.

Mr Stately was high-spirited and gentlemanly—at least he wished to pass for such ; well made ; had a manly countenance ; rich, proud, and exalted in his ideas ; but he was a fop in his gait, manner, and

dress. He was noisy, laughed loudly, and seemed to court attention,—always seemed very well pleased with himself. Every one said, ‘She will be a lucky lass that gets Will Stately;’ but he seemed in no hurry. He was rather a man of pleasure; but the pleasure was never allowed to interfere with business, which had his utmost attention.

Hard, active, and keen in business, he had a large portion of slack jaw at bargain-making. Fond of a good profit, with little trouble, if he could obtain it. He went a journey into the country every first Monday of the month, and returned on Thursday evening. He liked to sell goods in whole pieces or original packages, as it saved immense labour, and thus he often gave offence to cautious people by exceeding the quantity ordered. He kept an excellent riding-horse—cost, generally thirty to thirty-five pounds. It was surprising the quantity of goods he would sell in these few days. It took us two weeks to execute them and send all out, and then a clear week for his next journey, to post the books, and make out accounts.

He was one of a dozen who promenaded Princes Street on Sabbaths, and none dressed more fashionably than he did. Flesh-coloured pantaloons of stocking web, which clung to the shape, and were hardly modest. He could wear anything, for he knew he was a handsome man; and, as the Scotch saying is, ‘onything sets a weel-faured face.’ At another time he did not hesitate to put on a suit, the coat and pantaloons of very light mixture cloth, with a white vest. Well, he was a supreme-looking man. Mr Stately had no taste whatever for reading. Half an hour of the newspaper was all he sought, to see the leading article and the advertisements.

I was, at the end of my first year with him, as happy in my situation as I could wish. My master had a formal way of treating me with respect, which was quite pleasant to me; and the confidence he placed in me exalted me in my own opinion, and made me very anxious to please him. I now leave this subject for a time.

Old Adam Winterman had been the means of bringing my father and my uncle to Edinburgh. He had thriven well himself, and urged them strongly to come; for they all belonged to the same parish. After they did come, he was not unmindful of his promise to assist them all in his power. He did so; but they were soon in a condition to repay him, by sending in return grist to his mill. Adam’s wife was one of the old school; a hard-working, short-tempered woman, or rather one of those unhappy beings who have made scolding the chief em-

ployment of their lives ; and therefore let me correct myself by saying she was never so happy as when scolding. She was also a gear-gathering sort of a woman, and Adam and she had done very well. My mother, I remember, never liked her, for she could not converse pleasantly at any time. When about sixty-five years of age, she died ; and Adam, having remained a widower for a number of years, might have continued so for life, but Fate had more in store for him. In the course of his business he had to call at Dr Strait's mansion ; and the doctor being engaged, he had to wait a while, during which the cook, seeing an old gent in a cold day sitting in the lobby, addressed him in a couthie way, and with a kindly face, 'If you please, come in, come in the way, and take a chair by the fire ; you'll be far better there than in the cold of the lobby.' 'I'm sure o' that, lassie,' returned he, with a look as kind as her own. Here was a beginning. She was a bouncing woman, well set off by dress, and had a gift of smooth, flattering words. Then Mr Winterman had occasion to call at Dr Strait's often in the way of his business ; and so at last the old man thought he would be far better with her as his housekeeper than living out the end of his life 'his liefu' lane.'

But, bless us all, when it became known that old Adam Winterman was to marry Dr Strait's cook, and he so near threescore and ten, there was a talk sure enough. Adam's two sons, men about forty years, and in business partnership with their father, were determined to put it back, and never doubted that they would succeed ; but after a storm, or succession of hurricanes for four or six months, the marriage took place. If the sons could have dissolved the partnership, and left the father, they would have done so ; but the premises were the father's property, and the capital too, in a great degree, so they were obliged to feign something like submission, and bide their time. In various ways they tried to circumvent the old man, and to get some arrangement made, giving them an advantageous entry to the premises ; but in the new wife they had met their match. Her old husband became aware that all his safety lay in telling her everything, and trusting entirely to her ; and he did so. If they plotted, she could counter-plot ; and when she could not get so much money as she wanted, and knew where good sums were due the firm, she would get the old man to sign a receipt for twenty pounds to account ; and then she would tell the sons that the father had a better right to the money than they had, and with much emphasis would ask, Was it not his own ? At

last the sons put an end to the partnership, and built splendid new premises, all on credit. They took very little money with them out of the firm. Thereafter the old man had a very good roup, and got a very good tenant for his premises in the very same line. But now, when living on his money entirely, Mrs Adam Winterman became sensible that spending at the rate of one hundred and fifty pounds a year would soon eat a great hole in the old man's funds, whereby perhaps little would be left to her in the end; and being moreover of an active turn, and fond of company and bustle, she made up her mind to let rooms to genteel lodgers, in which she succeeded very well; for she was clean, an excellent cook, and could always say pleasant things to her lodgers when occasion required.

In order to connect my parties according to their natural relations, I may now say that my sweetheart Eliza Miller's father went into business in Edinburgh about the year 1795. He was offering to do well when he fell into declining health and died; and his widow, with one child, Eliza, found a home as housekeeper to her brother, a bachelor farmer on the borders. At the time Adam Winterman married Dr Strait's cook the Miller family stood thus: there were the bachelor farmer, Mrs Miller the widow, now his housekeeper, and her sister Mrs Adam Winterman. When Eliza was approaching to womanhood, her mother, sensible of her want of better education than she could command in her secluded part of the world, arranged with Mrs Winterman to take her for two years, so as she might learn dress-making, and acquire improvement in writing and grammar. This arrangement was carried into effect.

Mrs Winterman prided herself in keeping up an intimacy with my uncle and Helen, and that with the more care, because it helped to strengthen her party against the two sons of her husband. She liked visiting and showing off; and although she was easily seen through, yet her unquestionable cleverness and her buttered words rather left a pleasing impression. Helen and Eliza were thus introduced to each other's acquaintance, and they took to one another at once like two sisters. Hence my opportunity of seeing Miss Miller, which was first at a party on a Saturday afternoon in my uncle's. She was dressed, by Mrs Winterman's superintendence, in a very showy style, although I learnt afterwards it was a very economical kind of dress. Two or three gentlemen were there, who paid her considerable attention; one in particular, who had been about two years in trade, and was to all

appearance a thriving man. He monopolized her conversation almost. But all were quite lively and cheerful; and Miss Miller, by her sprightliness and her racy provincial accent, had a decided and pleasing effect upon all. Afterwards, the gentleman who had paid her so much attention saw her home. I had never been in company with any young lady to be compared with Eliza; but as I, by my usual gravity, had been taciturn and in the shade, I did not feel comfortable, and I tried to persuade myself that she was a giddy, shallow creature.

With this beginning—not very auspicious—the web of intercourse went on weaving. Eliza visited afterwards regularly at my uncle's, as had been agreed upon, and I frequently drank tea with Helen and her alone. My sentiments then began to change rapidly in her favour. Possessing as she did a cheerfulness and exuberancy of spirit which rose spontaneously on every occasion, she combined with this such correct ideas of female delicacy and modesty of deportment, as prevented her cheerful liberty from overstepping the bounds of propriety or assuming the most remote appearance of levity. Her freedom seemed to be the freedom of a pure mind, possessing the transparent hue of childish innocence—artless, confiding, and endearing to all around; yet there were times when the gaiety of her disposition and the gravity of mine contrasted so strongly, that the temptation to quiz me a little was indulged in both by Eliza and Helen. I did not feel very easy under this, for there were times when I thought that Eliza spoke to me with respect and tenderness. These instances made me quite happy, but they made me tender to the suspicion of contempt. How these old images rise upon me! I remember that pleasant summer Sabbath evening when she accompanied us all to a walk through the rich green parks. My uncle fell behind, speaking to an acquaintance. As we came to a rising ground: 'Now, Mr James, if you had the least gallantry in your disposition, you would offer me your arm to climb that hill.' I complied, and from that moment a new-born feeling animated all my thoughts. After my uncle came up, my arm was slyly withdrawn; and I was now a little before, now a little behind the line, to get another and another look of those sweet blue eyes and that blooming countenance. Sweet moments of life, let me once more live you over again, if only in the dim traces of memory!

During the two last years I was with Mr Stately I had frequent opportunity of seeing her. Helen and she had become very much attached, and every opportunity of exchanging visits was laid hold of,

such as the King's birthday, New Year's day, the races, etc. These were all times when I had that indescribable pleasure of youth—the company and conversation of one's first love. True, I did not then know the passion. I could not think of such a thing; and even if I had been able to understand, the indulgence of it was out of the question. A poor apprentice lad! No matter, I was always so happy in her company that I resolved to enjoy it as often as I could.

Mrs Winterman's house was often the resort of a few gentlemen. Her parlour was free to all comers. Sometimes she had lodgers, who were often there also. She had an alternation of them, and sometimes had the same lodger for years. I remember them well. There was the corn-merchant, the advocate, the clergyman; of the last of whom I may mention, that on one occasion, when I was by, and he was sitting on her parlour sofa, she so rattled away with her gross and fulsome flattery, that although he could not avoid blushing because it was so fulsome, yet he could not restrain his hearty laughter because it was so ludicrous. Nor was she herself less fond of flattery; for education, which generally abates that vice, had been in her case very limited. She was of so cunning, prying a disposition, that nothing escaped her notice. As for her husband, he sat quietly in the corner and read his book, or conversed with any good-natured person who took the trouble to converse with him. Above all, Eliza was a great favourite with him; for her natural goodness of heart prompted her to pay much attention to him, and in return he loved her as his own child. One day I remarked to her, 'How is it that you are such a favourite with all the old people?' She answered laughingly, 'Oh, that's very easy; for all old folks are fond of talking and of being listened to. Now, I just set myself to hear their story, and sometimes I do not mind it much, but I just keep on saying Yes, and No, and Indeed, etc. But sometimes I learn very valuable counsels from them; for they say, "You will know all this to be true when you are as old as me." But the value of Eliza was to be proved in another way; for a fever, which laid all the family on their backs,—viz., the old man and mistress, and also the maid,—brought her into request. For four-and-twenty nights she lay on a shake-down, at the call of one or other of the invalids; and those recovering were so weak that it was long ere they could help one another, and the daily attention required by the boarders added not a little to the great labour of that period.

Passing on a little as to time, I discovered, through Helen, that Mrs

Winterman was most anxious that Eliza should marry a Mr Homespun, a shipowner—he with the bunch of gold seals at his watch, who spoke so loudly, and laughed so heartily at his own jokes, and was so often at Back's Place. He was rich, and in his own way open-handed, even generous, and offered both Mrs Winterman and Eliza all manner of expensive amusements. He had it in his power, too, in consequence of his vessels arriving from foreign ports, of making many acceptable presents, which Mrs Winterman was not the kind of woman to decline. Mr Homespun, however, was almost double Eliza's age. In his company I was wonderfully quiet, thought much, said little. I knew that Eliza was gay in her temper, gay in her dress, and that she was surrounded by gay company. Sometimes she, without meaning me any harm, would inform me of a fine pleasure excursion here, or a ball there, where she had enjoyed herself so much, and named over the gay and the grand of the city who had been there,—all of which was gall and wormwood to me, nay, I chafed myself into a perfect rage. I tried to despise her associates, and even herself, and all the grand people and fine fashions in the world. She never dreamt what was passing in my mind, but saw and felt that my manner to her was cold and unkind. Her visits became fewer. I felt assured that she could command an alliance combining respectability and wealth; and as I had, I think, common sense, I saw the necessity of smothering my emotions. I even fancied I had succeeded in this, until the breaking out of a new or more circumstantial rumour gave me a cut over the most sensitive part of my heart, making me shrink and crouch, and at times feel that I was justly punished for my coldness, and rude refusal of the kind confidence which she had so generously bestowed on me, and which I thus appeared to fling away.

Still, however, she continued to visit Helen as frequently as formerly, but only varying the hour, so as evidently to show she wished to avoid my company. This, again, was a sore punishment, and a deserved one; and when my irritation had subsided, I deeply regretted the loss of her confidence, and of the easy, pleasant, free, and friendly conversation which she had maintained with me. But much as I regretted it, I had the approbation of my conscience; for I knew that it was to me at least decidedly dangerous.

CHAPTER V.

REFLECTIONS.

THE habits of deep thinking on religious matters which had always recurred to me now and then, even in very early life, had, during the period I was at Mr Forward's school, been almost blotted out from my mind. My change to Mr Worthy had brought me back again to thoughtfulness. The concern which I saw Helen labouring under with regard to my uncle, the heavy losses he was making, his staying out so often late, the confidence she was now bestowing upon me,—turned the bent of my character into its natural channel. I had also much leisure in Mr Stately's, and never was without my book, which I read stealthily. Helen and I talked much about my parents; and we read all the books in our bookcase at home. I cannot think that any were much better acquainted with Bunyan's whole works than we were. *Paradise Lost* was reserved for Sundays; a page of it was material for an hour's meditation. Thomson's *Seasons* I committed to memory in Mr Stately's office. I had also heard much laudatory notice of Pope's *Essay on Man*, and I procured a copy of it. I do not know if there is any book in the English language more fitted to stir up the mind to broad, general, and just thinking. These three books, therefore, lay at the basis of my character.

One of the most difficult points to reconcile, and what, indeed, I never could reconcile, was the opposition so strongly set up, I suppose chiefly by rigid old Calvinist divines, to all illustrations of reason and nature, as being any legitimate part of religion. They asked you, indeed, to turn your back on human reason entirely, and to look on nature—animate and inanimate—as a sinful affair altogether. This I never could do. What! is not reason the gift of God? Is not nature the work of His hands? What made Luther doubt first if the Roman Church was right? Was it not the gross inconsistency existing between the holy precepts of Christianity and the lives and practice of its professors? But before I go further, I must mention an old book-vender, whose stall on the side of the street-corner I passed at least once a week, covered with a piece of carpet when it rained; and the owner, an old dwarfish man, with bushy gray hair, took shelter in a

close-end till it became fair. I used to look at his old regiment of books, and the old man soon found out my taste. From him I purchased from time to time, in the course of the last two years I was with Mr Stately, books noted as standard pious works, viz. :—Practice of Piety, Whole Duty of Man, Theron and Aspasio, Watt on Prayer, Colonel Gardiner, Allein's Alarm, The Gentleman's Calling, Monitory Address, The Family Instructor,—these, and three times as many of such like, did I purchase at an average price of a shilling a volume ; and what is more, I read them all, or very nearly so !

I feel rather reluctant to write what follows, because it looks like boasting, but truth demands that I should do so, otherwise how could I give a veritable history of my life ? At this time, I believe, no one could be more sincerely desirous of living up to the strict letter of Christian duty. I sought the solitude of my chamber, or any other place I could get at in complete seclusion, and prayed often and earnestly to God that I might be converted, and that my heart might be changed ; nor was I easily discouraged, but persevered. But my zeal and anxiety were not rewarded in the way I had hoped ; no miraculous answer to prayer came to me ; and my mind became a chaos of contending opinions. I experienced no happiness or assurance of God's love. Yet let me not forget to state, with feelings of gratitude, that never was I able to pour out my whole soul and heart without reserve to God in prayer, but a great relief followed ; such as this : ' I have given over my sorrows and fears into the counsel of my best Friend ; and I believe that what is good and right for me will come forth in due time, and I will not therefore despond, but hope away.'

I have already made some allusion to novel-reading. On this subject much may be said on both sides. At first the weak-minded young man or young woman swallows trash with an eager appetite ; yet as education advances, mere trash will be rejected with contempt. The good literature becomes a test. If the reader has perused Sir Walter Scott's novels, or those of Dickens and Thackeray, or Fennimore Cooper's beautiful sea pieces and Indian wilderness delineations, so unique and fascinating, he will not after that be very easily pleased. Perhaps the greatest drawback to novel-reading is the circumstance that it enfeebles the mind, so that amusement becomes a predominant requisite in every book we take up. History and statistics become insufferable and dry. But again, with a better class of minds, when they know that these novels describe incidents which harmonize with history,

and rather illustrate it, I cannot but suppose that many have thereby been led to look into history who otherwise would have never done so ; and when we come at last to know that it is a sober and well-ascertained truth that facts are much more wonderful than fiction, we turn with pleasure to read the works of travellers and missionaries. But novel-reading, if judiciously gone about, is a most delightful way of spending a leisure hour or a leisure evening ; and however faulty it may otherwise be, if it keep us from dangerous company, or from rancorous gossip, it is a great good. The improvement on novels within the last half-century is immense. A poor novel drops into oblivion at once : a good one is a fortune to the author. Where is the man or minister either who has not read *Guy Mannering*, *Heart of Mid-Lothian*, and *Ivanhoe*, and others ? He would be a bold man who could confess himself so stupid. I have heard one of no small note in the literary world exclaim, ' I do not know how much money I would give for the delicious pleasure of reading that glorious novel, *Guy Mannering*, as I enjoyed it when I read it first ; but, alas, it is impossible ! '

If novel-reading became anything like the business of life, one would feel himself degraded by it ; living in the ideal world, while the realities of life were passing him in full current and unheeded by him, making him a drone in society. Novels have their highest zest when we have a spare hour ; when, released from duty or business, we wish to unbend, and we surrender up our minds to the pleasing delusion. If we are in trouble, and our hearts sore because of oppression, or unjust aspersion of our character, or the ingratitude of a bosom friend, and are sore and tired thinking over it,—we take up our novel in the fond hope that in its blissful illusions we may find, for an hour or two, oblivion of our grief, a softening of our care. But so lightly does this dreamland invest our imagination, that from time to time we find we have read a page, and do not remember a word of it. We take out our notebook to make a memorandum of some happy idea which has just occurred to us in relation to our real and oppressing grievance. Having done this, we swim again in the current of the tale, and allow ourselves to be diverted, amused, and even instructed by it. Again, amongst females, where the needle is busily plied, and there is no necessity for conversation, one may be spared to read—it may be from *Shakespeare*, *Scott*, *Milton*, or *Byron*. I have known this resorted to with the happiest effect. It furnishes food for the mind, subject of con-

versation, new ideas for discussion, and a cessation of that rancorous inquisition which vacant minds so often allow themselves to indulge in towards their fellow-creatures—much more deserving, perhaps, than themselves. And it is no small relief to aged persons, when they can lose remembrance for a time that they are old and worn and rheumatic, and be able to join their young friends in the tale under discussion. But I would be very sorry indeed to hear that any friend of mine would touch a novel on the day of sacred rest.

I have read many novels, employed many an hour in reading them that might have been much better employed, but also might have been employed in a much more blameworthy manner; yet I freely say, that with me they have been the ally, not the enemy, of virtue and morality. At the same time, had I been better attended to in the season of my youth,—had I been trained in geography, got some insight into geology, a glimpse of the glories of astronomy, and a fair introduction to the varied riches of history,—I would have read much more to my profit than I have done; my mind might have been a storehouse of knowledge, every separate article in its own place, labelled and ready to the hand for immediate use. Whereas my mind is comparatively a chaos of confusion, full, no doubt, but not of complete, well-formed ideas,—no connexion, no reference,—all imperfect, and not fit for present use; and when at any time I have ventured to contribute my quota in general conversation, a single question in cross-examination routed me and put me to silence. I was above thirty years of age ere I may say I knew aught of history. I had no spare money then to buy books; but I made what I feared would be a bad debt with a bookseller, and I purchased above sixty volumes bound, at an average price of five shillings each volume, and I read them every one. As I grew into familiarity with Hume's England, how my heart swelled as from time to time noble-minded men stood out in manly devotedness to save their country, fearlessly, with their lives in their hands, going boldly to battle with their country's enemies! Or what was much more admirable, when a patriot told a despot to his face, 'You may imprison me; you may take my life; but never—no, never—will I prove a traitor to the glorious cause of the liberties of my country.' And so they died; and these were not the low or the reckless, but the highest of the land,—noble by blood, and surrounded by all that can make life sweet and dear. Of their noble patriotism we now reap the fruits.

The History of the Reign of Charles V., the Thirty Years' War (the first fair stand-up fight between Catholics and Protestants), is equal in fascination to any romance, besides being deeply instructive. But of all the books, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* charmed me most. The subject so grand; the pompous, measured, sounding tread of the style,—I could not keep, when reading it, from fancying that a military band of music was near me, and that the swell of the notes and the beat of the big drum fell on my ear at every close. How sad is it to trace the downward course of this mighty empire, from full-bloom prosperity, world-wide dominion and fame, unexampled courage and skill, to the overspreading luxury of immense wealth, the enervating influence of long peace, decay of personal courage, the hiring in of mercenaries who soon became masters, the successful irruption of one savage horde after another, narrowing and narrowing the fast diminishing empire, till at last Constantinople and all civilisation sank, and left the world in barbarism and darkness! The finish of no book ever made me so sad.

Of the black, old, one shilling volumes, which I had purchased at the street stall, I would now remark that I did not always give up my mind or go along with the sentiments of the writer. I read one work which was avowedly written to prove that infant baptism was every way, both in reason and Scripture, to be preferred to the Baptists' practice of adult baptism. It made me, as far as conviction could go, a Baptist. We have, in our mode of infant baptism, one grave omission. The mother, who always has more to do with the planting the seeds of piety in the youthful mind than the father, has no part in the ceremony, and does not take on the vows with her husband, but is put aside as if she were of no importance. I never heard a good reason given for this.

There is a line in Pope,—

'Born but to die, and reasoning but to err.'

This offended me very much. How could we suppose Divine Wisdom justified in creating a world and a race doomed to such a fate? Instead, then, of being better than the brutes that perish, we are worse, because we have strong desires, destined never to be gratified. We have only knowledge enough to make us miserable that we know no more. We are subject to all bodily infirmity; and, besides, an ever-living craving after knowledge, and an earnest longing after immor-

talily. Was this implanted in our natures that our Maker might have pleasure in seeing the miseries of His creatures, groping so earnestly after what He had predetermined they should never attain to? Let the impious thought perish. Man, viewed as an imperfect being here,—as going through a preparatory course, to be perfected and finished in an after life,—possesses a beauty and a consistency which is quite in unison with our ideas of a benevolent Deity, in all of whose works goodness shines predominant. I did not read this work often, yet so beautifully smooth is the poetry, so distinct the impression of the sentiment, that every line remained stored up in my memory; they are constantly in existence, and mix themselves up in all my reflections. I have no hesitation in saying, that this book was far too heavy for me, at my tender and uninstructed period of life. It is meat for strong men, and too much for striplings such as I was; yet I *cannot* regret it.

My reading being of this very miscellaneous sort, it was no wonder that my mind became a chaos of confusion. I never applied to any one to assist me. Perhaps it would have been much better for me if I had had my ideas interchanged with some one more enlightened than myself; but it is long long indeed since I wished to form my ideas for myself in the open air of the world, and from my own experience, not recopied from books,—not because this or that one has said it, but because I have elaborated the thought myself. Even now I think this right.

Although my miscellaneous reading thus threw my mind into a state of agitation rather unfitting my age, yet my feelings of reverence and devotion to my Creator and Redeemer were never at any one time quite obscured, and I was now led into a new train of thinking which produced quite a new sort of practical result. Among other books which fell in my way at this time were Hervey's Meditations, and works of similar sentiments, which eulogized a rural life, and appealed more to the feelings and affections than the judgment. My imagination was heated more than my understanding was informed; and by some means or other I formed the idea that a rural life was by far the most likely to conduce to the practice of virtue and to ensure happiness,—that the wickedness of great cities was so extensive and engrossing, that there was but a small chance of any man continuing to live in them in the sound belief and practice of the true religion.

Having thus fixed my mind for life, as I fondly and foolishly thought, I allowed my thoughts an unlimited range of fond anticipa-

tion of its fancied superiority. I thought of the unbroken quiet which, as a farmer or something else which I had not yet decided upon, I would enjoy in the country. With all rural images I associated virtue and religion, and with all thoughts of the town came the remembrances of its known sins. I fancied myself at my own fireside, imparting the knowledge of sacred things to all around me. The opportunity I would have for solitary musing in walking and meditations. I became a heated enthusiast in favour of my new scheme, which I fondly expected and believed to be a sure method of obtaining happiness, as far as this world had it to bestow, and a more direct and likely way by which, as a Christian, I might obtain assurance of eternal life, than dwelling in a city, which the books I had read induced me to think one great mass of wickedness.

CHAPTER VI.

MY CHANGED CONDITION—FARMING LIFE.

It was a dull cloudy day when I left Leith. I embarked about eleven o'clock in one of the large boats. We had been an hour upon the water, and were making little way. It was high-water, and the wind from the north-west; and our helmsman kept the vessel jammed up close almost in the eye of the wind, for fear, as he said, of getting to leeward of Pettycur. We had not advanced above a mile when we were overtaken by one of the light cutters, going along with oars and sails at a most enviable rate, while we were cooped up in our sluggish wooden castle. The cutter hailed us, and asked if we were for Pettycur that tide; adding, that if we would pay them one shilling each, they would land us there in an hour. All the passengers agreed at once. We had paid our fare of one shilling each as soon as we were fairly clear of Leith Harbour, and we now paid our other shilling immediately on entering the cutter, except one gentleman, who said he would like to be nearer the other side first; 'for look you,' said he to the boatmen, 'if you don't pull away, the big boat will beat you yet,' pointing to her. And so it was; for by easing her off a point or two from the wind, her sails filled, and she was coming after us very well,

keeping as good a course as ourselves; but they had also a pair of large oars out, two men to each oar. We saw the game now. The crews of both boats quite understood each other, and thus managed to get us passengers to pay a fare to each. One individual who remained in the sloop with his horse, passed us mounted ere we had walked a mile, remarking, with a smile, 'I am not far behind, you see.'

The roads, in consequence of the late rains, were much cut up, tough, and slippery at some places, which made walking very fatiguing. Most of the passengers fell off here and there, and at Kirkcaldy I was left alone. I had had a drink of beer with one of them, and proceeded on my way, striking off to the north. I had, as I understood, not less than ten miles to walk, and was foolishly cumbered with a greatcoat, put on to please Helen; and not being accustomed to any upper garment at all, I perspired heavily, and was sadly bespattered and very tired when I arrived at Ferlieknowes, in time to save myself from being bewildered in the darkness.

I found that Mr Meadows was from home. I hesitated a little in introducing myself to his wife, who appeared cold and forbidding in her manner, and I felt uneasy under it; but as soon as she fully understood who I was, she changed her tone, made me come into the parlour, and got tea ready for me, with a plate of ham and egg. I felt vastly improved after this meal, and the more so as she kept talking to me. She was a stately, comely, well-proportioned, filled-up woman, with a fine complexion; the drawbacks being a flat forehead, seamed with lines, not of age but of habit, and a gray eye, which I had seen both cold and suspicious, but which now beamed kindly upon me. Her daughter was nearly as opposite as could be; for it was quite evident, even to a stranger, that she had a full allowance of mirthful hilarity in her disposition, which shone out the more boldly on every occasion when her mother left the room. Miss Meadows put a few questions to me with much cordiality and frankness; and as she passed out and in from the room to the kitchen, I could hear her joking with the maids. I knew not what she said, or the subject of it, but it always ended in a hearty laugh; and so sensitive was I, and apprehensive that it might be about myself, that it made me quite uneasy; for I supposed they were laughing as at a good joke—the shopkeeper come to turn ploughman. Probably they were; it was quite natural, provided they knew my story, which I believe they did.

Feeling tired, Mrs Meadows recommended me to go to bed. My

bed was in the upper floor of a decayed two-storey house, a hundred and fifty yards from the present dwelling. It had been the preceding farmer's residence, and Mr Meadows had got a new one when he came to the place, nearly two nineteens before. He preferred a good, roomy one-storey cottage. I was not at home at all in my new bedroom. On one side of the attic-room were three beds, closed and divided from each other with deals at each other's ends, and with strong doors to draw when required to shut out the cold. A chaff-bed and a deal bottom formed my couch of repose. Our covering was a load of heavy hairy blankets and sheets; the latter seemed to me to be almost as coarse as sacking. My place was beside the foreman, who slept single; the bed next ours containing two ploughmen, and there being two strip-lings in the one next the door. I was allowed the use of the stable lantern, as it was my first night; but was made aware that no light was allowed at any time in the sleeping-place.

All the five inmates had been in bed for some time, and I was cautioned by the lass who showed me up not to make any noise, as the lads were tired, and would not like to be disturbed; so I slipped quietly into my place, and after exchanging a few words with my bedfellow, was soon fast asleep. I awoke in the middle of the night, owing, I suppose, to the hardness of my bed and the weight of the blankets, and lay about an hour awake, musing upon the step I had taken, and listening to the unceasing gush of water as it fell over the dam-dyke. On opening my eyes next morning, the room was tenantless, except myself and good daylight. While I put on my clothes, I viewed everything around me,—so new; not a chair or a stool; four coarsely-painted red and blue chests formed a row at each other's ends, opposite the beds—these served for seats. Above them, on wooden pins a foot long, hung horses' collars, harness, a lady's side-saddle, and other rural things. Old shoes were abundant in corners, most of them mouldy; a dark place behind the beds was full of old spinning-wheels, wool-wheel, and so forth. On the tops of the beds were bee-hives—some new, some old. All around were coarse top-coats for the men, cudgels, bundles of sacks, implements of agriculture; and, to crown the whole, above my head were the couples of the thatched roof, naked, except where they were festooned with drapery of cobwebs dangling down in every corner.

The ground floor beneath was nearly full of potatoes in the one end, and in the other was a chimney, with a swey, and a large copper

kettle for boiling meat to the horses or the cattle when requisite. There was no grate, the fire of wood and coal being kindled on the stone hearth; several sacks of chaff and tubs of small potatoes standing round about. I had a look at all these things, little thinking how impatiently Mr Meadows was looking for me, now nearly an hour after his usual breakfast-time.

When I met him, he shook hands with me kindly and heartily; told me I had almost lost my breakfast by lying so long, for the lads were away two hours before with corn, and to bring back coals from the coal-hill; and he added, half-joke, half-earnest, 'If I had not put off the time a little, you would have been too late, for my wife does not like to make meat twice.' After breakfast, he told me I was welcome; for he had been at a valuation the day before, and, as he said he understood I was a good writer, he would set me to work to calculate and copy for him; and for the first week I was quite busy, in consequence of his letting his writing fall so much in arrear. I was delighted to be of use to him, and this consciousness set me quite at rest with all the family. I say nothing about Mr Meadows' two sons; they were both too soft—neither like father, mother, nor sister. At the time I was there, he had sent them away,—one to one friendly farmer, another, for the same reason, to another, that he might try what a change would do. Sometimes they had not been very respectful to their father; and then the mother had been so severe with them latterly, it came to bitterness. I must let them pass, and dare not enter into their history.

As for Mr Meadows himself, he was highly respected by all who knew him, for his uprightness, candour, and cheerfulness. He spoke loud, as from a hale heart. Take him all in all, and on an average, no man was better acquainted with the agriculture of the district; for he knew and practised the most approved methods of rearing both corn and cattle. He was a good and a careful master, but inflexible in discipline. No man was re-engaged by him who was idle, careless, or immoral. But he was kind, liberal, and indulgent to all who were poor or unfortunate in his neighbourhood; and if any of the servants, male or female, met with an accident or were taken ill, no man would pay more attention to them,—he allowed for them the best medical advice, and his guidwife prided herself in paying personal attention to them till they were quite recovered.

The image of the farmer is still before me. He did not look quite

so old as his wife; was a square, well-built, muscular man; would have been accounted tall but for his breadth;—yet when he was dressed in his blacks to attend a funeral, with a white neckcloth, as was the fashion then in many parts, or when he acted as one of the elders of the kirk, then on these occasions he looked very much the gentleman. Indeed, he was a superior farmer. The factor on the estate threw much drudgery upon him,—such as redding of marches, valuing houses, drains, etc., arranging the preliminaries for settling of any disputes, so that the factor could come into an easy triumph when he met the tenant face to face. Letter-writing was not so common then; yet so continuously was he employed in the affairs of the estate, that I may say, as an average of all the year round, he either wrote or received a letter every week. He wrote shortly, explicitly, and in homely terms. I was of much use to him in this respect; and I was glad and proud to be at this work, for I had a dread of the season of labour, now fast approaching. He got no direct pay for his labour; yet it is certain he sat unmoved not only till his first lease was quite run out, but for two years more, ere he got his second lease, and then he only gave twenty pounds of an advance, when every one said, if it had been put into the market, it would have freely brought a hundred pounds more. This was not bad, but he wrought well for it all. As for Mrs Meadows, I soon changed my opinion. To be sure she was very formal and rigid in her manners at all times, and perhaps introduced religious topics oftener than prudence would have suggested; but it was evident, that if her manner was cold, her heart was warm. She was a great favourite among all the cottagers round; because, wherever real distress existed, she gave both cordials and advice, and much of her time, also, if required.

Upon a Sunday afternoon, my trunk having some time before reached Ferlieknowes, I was sitting in a corner studying one of my old favourite books. Mrs Meadows coming in found me at it, and inquired what it was. It happened to be a book she thought well of, and this led to a conversation so frank and earnest on her part, that I fell into the same disposition; and before we dropped our enthusiasm, she had seen all my library, and had borrowed several of my books.

From this day I was a decided favourite with her. She seized every opportunity of engaging me in serious discourse, and soon became acquainted with all my history, and my reasons for leaving my business to reside in the country. In general, she approved of what I

had done, and endeavoured by her advice to strengthen me in what she was pleased to call my good resolutions. But when I stated my belief that there was so much less vice practised in the country than in the town, she sighed, and said, 'I wish you may continue to think so; but wait till you have been a summer and a winter among us, and then judge for yourself.' This a little damped me.

On the Sunday afternoons I often accompanied her in her favourite walks. One was in a long solitary den at the back of the steading, where a footpath wound along the one side, crossed over, and up the other, making above a mile and a half. We conversed busily all the way. I see her yet, her face sparkling with animation and eagerness; stooping down to pick up some little flower to look at or smell, throwing it away next minute unconsciously. Her moralizing, tedious style of conversation was sometimes like to exhaust my patience; but she had acquired such an ascendancy over me that I always preserved the utmost respect for her, and never allowed myself to exhibit any signs of impatience. Her memory was extensively stored with all the principal texts and passages of Scripture; and at every turn of the discourse she brought forward instances similar to what we were speaking of, or else a passage, perhaps of some verses in length, either in justification or condemnation of some practice then under discussion. It was these quotations which made our discourses so tedious.

But when I say this, I do not mean to insinuate that such use of the Scriptures in due bounds is not highly commendable; but she overdid it, and, like many ministers, spent her time in proving what no one was calling in question; thus by quotation on quotation destroying all interest in connexion with the main subject of conversation. I wish I could draw a graphic picture of her, such as in these walks she appeared to me.

She was tall, but did not look so, being well filled up. She was a well-proportioned woman. Her full-dress was a silver-gray wincey gown, a full breast of cambric handkerchief, and an unexceptionable pure white cap of full size. If the weather was chilly, she threw on a loose shawl. This profusion of white, supported as it was by the clear healthy red of her complexion, gave quite a pure dignity to her whole appearance. It was her custom to lay her arms across her breast, and walk in her stately way, her gown-skirt swaying a little with each step. It was unfortunate for her influence that she was so severe and gloomy in her manner. A smile passed away quickly, as if she ought

not to allow it; and to be cheerfully light-hearted seemed a habit not to be indulged in. But nature triumphed sometimes; and even a cheerful laugh would find its way, to be quenched almost immediately in a deeper relapse into the furrowed forehead and cold eye. 'Siccan fules we are; it wad set us better,' and so forth. Some part of this austerity might be otherwise accounted for than by natural disposition. Her father had been one of the most exemplary members of the church; and he had brought up his family in so strict a manner, that it cost Mrs Meadows an effort to speak of any differing body of Christians with composure—nay, even to think of them without bitterness or contempt. I know she was not quite pleased that her husband would not introduce regular family worship morning and night every day in his family. All his people got their meals in his kitchen, and he saw many obstacles. He said he would not like to have exercise unless every one was present, as we were all equally God's creatures; and the men were so often away early, and went to bed soon when tired; and then there was seed-time and harvest; and, in short, he could not consent to what he foresaw would be beset with so many obstacles. The extemporary prayers might also have deterred him; for to have read prayers, however well composed, would have been counted no better than rank Popery.

But Sabbath was observed thoroughly. All were in his room, and he then prayed with all his people. He had learnt to do this very well; and when at any time he found it necessary to notice the times and seasons, or occasions of joy or grief, and fine or adverse weather, or an abundant crop or otherwise, he had a few slips lying before him to be used according to the emergency. He prayed deliberately, in a good, full, solemn voice. He attended to the boys, and examined them in their Catechism, while his wife and Mary paid the same attention to the females. He tried to have a chapter or two, verse about, read by all; but some from bashfulness, some from want of teaching, could not get on. It was a trial from which they shrank nervously, and it was given up; but they managed always four verses of a psalm to two or three well-known tunes. Sometimes they had good voices among the servants, and the singing was tolerable. In these circumstances, any one might have said to me, 'Surely now you are fitted to your mind. Placed in a situation so favourable to meditation and study; realizing all your fond desires and anticipations of a calm, innocent, peaceful life, suited in every re-

spect to the study and practice of true religion,—was it as pleasant to you, as conducive to your soul's welfare, as you had promised yourself?' Without hesitation, candour compels me to say I was disappointed. I found, as far as I was capable of judging, that religion and its practice are very little affected by outward circumstances. It lives in the heart, whether in the city or in the field. My thoughts, on the contrary, were those of a visionary inexperienced boy, and were very soon dissipated by a little real personal experience and knowledge of parties.

Although I had every advantage of an exemplary family,—solitude at command, and all that I could have wished,—yet often on Sabbath did weariness steal upon me. I would lay aside my book, and slip away out of the house, and join the lads in their crack in the cart-shed or barn-yard, or in fine weather by the sunny side of the feal-dyke, covered with short broom in blossom. What made the society of the family less pleasant on Sabbath was, that Mrs Meadows would not allow any conversation whatever, but such as had a direct connexion with religion. Any subject of a general nature was put an end to by her usual remark, 'Sirs, I'm sure you ha'e plenty of time through the week for these matters.' If, however, a stranger or two were with us, she was on thorns for the time: good breeding demanded from the mistress of the house some courteousness to her guests, and neutral topics had to be discussed other than religious. I met several slight reproofs from her for strolling away to the lads, and for introducing general topics or news; and I confess the yoke galled me—it was too strict. I fancy I see her now, in profound silence, except the crackling sound of turning over pages amongst us, casting glances of her gray eye first at one and then at another of us, to see if, like children, we were diligent and attentive. Mary sometimes, by her father's desire, read aloud for a quarter of an hour, and then he would take a saunter; and an intelligent farmer never saunters over his farm in vain. He would make his general remarks on his return, on which occasions his wife never meddled with him; but when the conversation waxed warmer and more wordy than she approved, she would leave the room. It was toleration without cordiality between husband and wife; for Mr Meadows would not forego his loud cheerful tone, and Mary and I frequently availed ourselves of the breathing time by accompanying him in his sauntering walks. To this day, I think it quite wrong to try to make the Sabbath-day one of gloom and sadness; and innocent

conversation ought at least to be allowed so far as to relieve the minds of the young from depression, and induce them to continue to love the Sabbath, and not to fear it. It is indeed my belief, that many instances can be pointed out where a family having been coerced in this rigid way, and having come to maturity, and found it necessary for them to shape their course by their own judgment, that such is the relief they experience, they are very apt to run into the other extreme of laxity or even levity. The Sabbath was intended for a blessing to man,—a day of rest, in the first place, from all worldly labour, cares, and anxieties; and secondly, that we might have time to muse upon all the good things God has placed before us for our consideration, and to worship our God and Creator and our Saviour, who left us such an example that we might carefully study it and follow in His steps.

From a close observation of Mr and Mrs Meadows, I came to conclude that she had an opinion that her sectarian belief was perfection. Much of her religious conversation was a warm defence of her creed and belief against all real or supposed adversaries. I had read 'Theron and Aspasio.' She seemed to me to be the Aspasio of Ferlieknowes; while Mr Meadows, who liked the practical, obvious, undeniable part of Christianity, was the Theron. I always understood Theron better than Aspasio in that printed imaginary controversy. I thought I was somewhat like Theron myself, taking nature, reason, etc., all along with me as well as the Scriptures and the creeds. Both, however, had too much regard for the good opinion and heartfelt happiness of the other to push the matter further. He knew well he could unsettle his wife's mind by speaking plainly to her, and asking her to answer a few questions he could put to her: and she, on her part, was afraid to offend him by pushing her dogmas on him. But, on the whole, I felt almost an assurance that the husband was damped and embarrassed in prayer; for he knew that, as his wife did not choose to express any approbation, it was tacit condemnation.

I cannot leave this part of the subject easily, for I feel its importance. A man who has got a good education, and can pleasantly express himself in prayer, has a great advantage over him who cannot. But, again, he who cannot, may do what is even better: he may in one hour compose his prayer for Sabbath, and write it fairly out on paper in a far more guarded, because more carefully studied manner; and therefore more fit and appropriate to the time and condition of all who hear it. A prayer which does not find its way into our heads and

touch our hearts, take the tone of the time and the day in which it is delivered, and suitably allude to our joy or our sorrow, our prosperity or our adversity, our sunshine or our shade, falls to the ground. Who that is in earnest to serve God aright would grudge one hour to compose it, and another to fairly copy it out?

I turn now with great pleasure to delineate Mary Meadows. She was a jewel of a creature: nothing could be more pleasant than her sweet smile, or her exhilarating laugh, as it burst away from her spontaneously in unrestrained mirth. One would be sad indeed whom she failed to rouse to happy cheerfulness; and from morning to night it was to be heard,—now in the kitchen, now in the room, now by the burnside, and now from the bleaching-green. There was nothing conquered her mother like this. ‘Lassie, lassie,’ she would say, trying to look grave, but the dimple at the corner of her mouth betrayed the pleasure she felt, ‘I do not know what to make of you. But ye’ll change your tune yet, some day.’ She was just the middle size. Her form was faultless; it was symmetry, lightness, and activity combined. She was quite free from affectation. She loved her parents dearly, and studied their wishes in the most attentive manner. She read much to her mother, and talked much with her father. It was delightful to see her in this latter position,—her eyes full of an affectionate and confiding expression; and as she pushed back her shining black hair, in the animation of her address, and exposed her clear and beautifully red complexion more fully to view, it was a sight not to be surpassed on earth. Her father seemed to rejoice in the sweet sound of her voice. How his heart must have prized the treasure he possessed,—so animated, so affectionate; such a mixture of the playfulness of the child relieved by the thoughtfulness of the woman; a blending together of the estimable, endearing, and lovely, in as sweet a union as could be seen! When out of her parents’ immediate presence, her mirth was spontaneous and unbounded. It was not a vulgar laugh, to give offence; but the welling over of a young heart brimful of joy. No subject so dry or barren but Mary would strike fire out of it; and her singing had a wild melody, yet much true music in it, and Mary was seldom quiet; either singing or making merry as the mood was, or exchanging cheerful greetings with the passers by.

I was fond of Mary’s company; for, under the general appearance of a laughing, thoughtless creature, lay hid a soul glowing with romantic enthusiasm and ardent love of all that was good in humanity

and beautiful in nature. She had a taste for the finest poetry, and read Shakespeare in secret, for she did not wish to offend her mother ; and she kept such books in a locked drawer of her own. I have heard her, when she thought no one was listening, repeat some lines of Burns in so tender a style, and so true to the poetic inspiration, that it brought tears to my eyes. I could scarcely allude to any well-known poet than she would, off-hand, give me a quotation. Amongst her other accomplishments, she had a turn for satire ; and I did not escape,—nay, she forced me to laugh with her at my own expense. This never hurt me ; it was her way ; she could not help it, and did not try. I had a good many opportunities of conversing with her during the dark months of winter, when I was writing for Mr Meadows ; but now the day was longer, and the season of labour had arrived.

It was the end of January. Symptoms of spring were beginning to make their appearance. The weather was fine, and much out-of-door work had been done in the previous fortnight. Hitherto I had not been put to any work ; for, when not writing, I was requested to assist in the barn at a time, or go a message with the pony to the village ; and hitherto I had always eaten my meals with them in the parlour. Mr Meadows now asked me if I was still as ready as ever for work. I told him I hoped I was ; and he answered me by saying he would try me on the morrow in place of the oldest boy, who had sprained his ankle. I was accordingly entrusted with a single horse cart, and allowed two women-servants and a boy to assist me in gathering the stones off the new grass, that the scythe might cut the closer when the hay crop was ready. The mornings were cold and frosty, and many of the stones were fixed by the frost. These we had to pull out with our hands, or kick out with our shoe-toes. I often got so benumbed that I could scarcely do anything ; the skin of my finger-ends was worn quite through in various places, cracked and painful. I wrought away without complaining, although Mr Meadows could not help sometimes cracking his joke at my expense ; for he saw well how hard it was upon me. The small part of my back was so sore with frequently bending down that I was very glad to sit still, even for a whole hour, and it cost me an effort to rise again. I was now taking my food in the kitchen. The first morning I got charge of the stone cart, I went of my own accord, as was necessary ; for the parlour and kitchen took their meals at different hours. I was young ; the work and fresh air made me hungry enough ; and I did not mind the country fare. The porridge, or brose, and fine sweet milk, the kail and chappit pota-

toes, etc., I was tolerably well pleased with. But I felt the change of society more than I liked to say. I now began to feel the reality around me.

My next job of regular labour was the harrows. I was much worse here. The horses were abreast of other horses in the next rig, and had a good long step, so that I was hardly able to walk so fast among the red land, which, with the drought, was like beds of hard cinders; and when the harrows got clogged with dirt or wrack, as the roots of weeds were called, I had to lift the harrows clear of it, and to resume my place. It cost me the exertion of my utmost strength to get up with my horses again. To have allowed them to stop for one moment, would have been out of all order. At night how my feet did burn! I could not sleep for some time. I was often too tired to sleep, and in the mornings felt more stiff and wearied than when I went to bed. The lad was, however, now fit for duty again, and I got a change of labour—odd jobs, such as rooting out whins, repairing the dam-dyke with stones and turf cut from the green sward, clearing obstructions out of open drains and ditches, splitting roots of trees for firewood. The day I repaired the dam-dyke, Mr Meadows was short with me. I hesitated, and began to ask explanations. ‘Hoot, man, ye would need so many directions as I ha’e nae time for. Look about you, man; exercise your head and your hands, and let me see you mak’ a gude job o’t before dinner-time;’ and away he went. I did make it out; but it was a poor affair, not so much for want of labour as skill to arrange the materials. Meanwhile I spent my Sundays in the parlour as before.

One day Mr Meadows said to me, as I was wheeling some earth to his garden by myself, ‘Well, James, I have a letter from your uncle, saying, if you are tired of your own plan, he is anxious you should come over, as he thinks Mr Watson would give you a fair salary to become his clerk.’ I answered that I had hardly had time to make a fair trial yet. ‘Well,’ said Mr Meadows, ‘is that your answer?’ I said it was, in the meantime. From this date he treated me more as a common servant, except on Sundays, and gave me as cool, short directions what I was to do as to any servant, and, as I thought, a fuller measure of work. I always made it out; but sometimes it was very hard upon me, and I became very quiet and low-spirited. I believe he was angry with me. He saw I was distressed to do the labour, observed my sadness, and had concluded that I would be quite ready to give up my plan. My refusal he ascribed to stubbornness and obstinacy, and he thought my conduct on the whole ungrateful to my uncle.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRIAL CONTINUED.

I WAS now associated more closely with servants, male and female,—eating with them and working regular hours along with them. I had formerly been rather nice about my food, but not now. Every variety was acceptable: green kail, even kail-brose, sowans, milk-brose, and bread and milk, were most acceptable; broth made with beef, and a little of the beef, on Sunday. My general health was benefited by the change. I was sensible of this. The busy season had begun. The potatoes and turnips were to be cleaned and hoed, and weeds pulled in all directions. The romance of the country was gone. My days and nights were all alike to me. Up with the sun, and work with no interval till his setting; then supper, and bed alone had any charms for me. It was labour, meat, sleep, day after day, except Sunday; and I never felt the value of the day of rest till now. I often thought what a mistake I had made; but I said little. I thought frequently upon the saying of Eliza the night we walked upon the Calton Hill. A sense of pain and humiliation accompanied these recollections. I found I had acted a silly part. So far from finding it easy and pleasant, I now saw, what I might have seen clearly before if I had not wilfully shut my eyes, that years of labour must be gone through, and a sum of five hundred pounds at the very least at my command, before I could be a farmer of a four-horse farm, or have any prospect of succeeding in that line. I was afraid that my conduct had lowered me in the opinion of all my friends, especially Eliza; and this was the most painful thought of all. And then, so far from finding the male and female servants among whom I was now placed, that sort of soft, virtuous, innocent beings my imagination had painted them, I found there was no end to their grumbling, petty jealousies, and ill-nature, except in the indulgence of coarse humour, which was reckoned rare fun by them, but was rather disagreeable to me.

After the seed season was over, the weather fine, and the day long, still I did not find my pleasure in a country life much increased. Labouring in the heat of the day made me so sufficiently tired that I could enjoy nothing so well as my bed. The townspeople, I often thought, have the best of the country. When they visit it, they have

always leisure to stroll by the sweet, clear burnside, to sit in the shade of the trees in the heat of the day, and to climb the hill to enjoy the grandeur of the scene, when the sun dips his burning rim in the gleaming ocean, and then, as if delighted with it, sinking slowly to rest in its bosom. This is a new and a glorious sight to the citizen who has been pent up nearly all the year round. So are many of the rural sights and scenes to them : the fragrant smell of the hay ; the odour of the blooming beans and peas ; the cackling poultry of the farm-yard ; the ducks disporting themselves in the clear pool, swimming lazily and silently along, and anon rising, flapping their watery wings and quacking aloud for very joy, as much as to say, ' See how I enjoy my life ; am I not a happy creature ? ' the lazy cattle in the meadow lying satisfied and silent, with such a clean look about them, well washed with the rains, and bedding themselves ever anew among the clean, fresh, sweet grass ; the rollicking, mellow-toned blackbird in the young wood, making all listen ; the faint, singular cry from the deepest shade, ' Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! '—all give such a fresh and singular pleasure. But an inhabitant of the country cares almost as little for these things as we do for looking at the stones of the pavement, except when associated with ideas of pecuniary gain.

Then our Sabbaths in the country, from which I had anticipated such satisfaction, disappointed me much. We had three miles to church, and one sermon by a faultless old clergyman, whose routine of sermons, prayers, etc., was stereotyped. By the time we got home, and had dinner, it was pretty well over in the afternoon. We all then took to our books ; but some yawned or nodded, others entered into a conversation about the lads and lasses of each other (if no superior was in hearing), with a sprinkle of taunting to give it relish ; some stole away to the sleeping apartment, or quietly to some appointment ; some revised, in a lazy way, their Catechism for the evening. Mrs Meadows watched me pretty closely, and we generally had an hour of conversation such as has already been named. I was now willing to acknowledge that my opinion of the innocence, happiness, and contented condition of the rural population had undergone a considerable alteration. Such scenes as the following had their due effect upon me. One of the maid-servants was a strong, active, good-looking young lass. She had a sweetheart who resided a few miles off ; a respectable lad, of whom she was justly proud. They used to meet on Sabbath afternoons ; indeed, they did not affect any concealment.

Our lads felt a little sore at the indifference with which she treated them; for she promptly repelled their attempts to make themselves agreeable to her. A combination was formed against our Madge, and practised almost incessantly when any opportunity occurred from under our master's eye. Sly insinuations—'What wad folk think of them that stayed out so late?' advising her to take care of herself; provoking comparisons and remarks as to his personal appearance—'Was yon him I saw you wi' at the minister's stile? Ye're no ill to please—a worm-eaten chap yon. He was sair pitted with smallpox, if it was him. An' he had a grand greatcoat on too, unco lang i' the tails; and it needit it a' too, for if I'm no mista'en he's no very well made ready among the feet, if yon was him. But if I had na' seen you speaking to him, I wad ha'e thought it some bellows-mender on the tramp.' The remarks as to his face and feet were founded in fact, and it cut the deeper. Poor Madge defended herself against them all with much spirit, and paid them back in their own coin,—sparing neither father, mother, brother, sister, nor sweetheart of theirs; asking when there was news 'frae the beggar-man at the Bogston; he was on the parish.' 'How Kitty Wilson's sair red een were now; it'll be a pity if they are aye like yon;' and much more, but I have given sample enough. She was able for any one of them singly; but having no friends amongst the others, it was hard for her to bear it, and sometimes she would, when wrought up to a pitch of anger, say something more than was consistent with prudence or modesty. This was the advantage sought for by the lads, who never failed to celebrate their triumph by a hearty laugh, which generally reduced poor Madge to sullen silence for a week after.

This was as bad a school for the young people as was Mr Forward's. I durst not venture a word, for my own case laid me so open. But after a time I named it to Mary, and she named it to the foreman, and stated how very much vexed her father would be if he thought any of his folk did not get leave to work their work in peace and quietness. He, in his own time, named it to Sandy Boastful, the principal ringleader, and after that there was comparative peace. It was by being privy to such scenes as these that my eyes were widely opened to the false estimate I had formed of rural happiness. There was no drinking among them; no political or instructive reading: to smoke a pipe, gossip a while in the smiddy or the shoemaker's, tailor's, or merchant's shops in the evenings, to retail their news, and aggravate

and magnify every rumour, was their evening's relaxation. Mr Meadows offered any of them a reading of his library. It consisted mostly of religious books, about two dozen of volumes. They were seldom asked.

I must, however, do all the justice to say, that at the annual celebration of the Lord's Supper, or Sacrament as it was called, their conduct was expressive of the most sincere and devoted attachment to their duties for this occasion. From the time it was first intimated, a change appeared to have taken place. All on Sundays studied their books, and would frequently be found in out-of-the-way places reading their Bible and other preparatory books, and I cannot doubt seeking the assistance of God in prayer. There was more peace in the field, as if a restraint had been laid on every tongue. Upon the Thursday previous to the Sabbath I happened to have a female sitting next me—a lively young lassie of about seventeen years of age. We had a stranger minister, who had the happy manner in preaching of affectionate earnestness. He portrayed the last days of the Saviour's life and His sufferings, and at every pause of his discourse, cried 'Surely, you will come!—surely you will come to such a Friend as this!' My attention was drawn to the lass, who was making awkward motions, holding down her head, while her back was heaved up by almost sobbing. She had much to do to keep herself from weeping aloud. I first thought she was unwell; but it was soon explained. She was to be a communicant for the first time.

One fine warm afternoon in May, Mary and I were set to plant half an acre of early potatoes convenient to the dwelling-house. It had been prepared for the seed in the morning, and the plough was to cover in all at a given hour. We started, each with a small basket of cut potatoes in hand, in adjoining rows. I do not know how it was, but we were soon trying who should plant fastest. At first I thought I could easily beat her; very soon I found she could beat me. I tried to keep on a quiet equality; but no, she would shoot ahead, and I was obliged to suffer the indignity of being always two or three yards behind. I thought she must have slighted her work, and that it would be irregular. In this, too, I was wrong. I had a very sore back; probably so had my lively partner, but she did not seem tired, and made no complaint. Again, in spreading of the turnip manure I was placed alongside of Madge: I made shift to keep nearly up to her, but when I made the least attempt to pass, she showed her mettle

in a moment. How she wrought right and left, it was a treat to see ; firm, active, tight, and smart, she distanced me in a moment. These things annoyed me. I was dull in general now. I saw my error, and I was by accident placed in a situation which gave me more time to think. I had been set to the very humble post of herding the horse. I suppose I had showed hesitation or timidity,—and these creatures are quick to discern. In place of obeying me, the gray mare turned round, and half contemptuously lashed out, not viciously but playfully, and I only got the stroke on the outside above the ankle. If the mare had struck out viciously, my leg would have been broken.

I limped about with a swelled leg and a staff for nearly three weeks, and had but poor company in my own thoughts : indeed, I was so tired of my situation that I would have been thankful of any pretence for leaving Ferlieknowes ; but none offered, and I was not yet subdued enough to confess voluntarily. The turnips and potatoes had been all cleaned and furred up ; the hay was made and in cole ; the near approach of the fine month of August was bringing to maturity and to a golden colour the various crops of grain ; and I felt a degree of excitement at the approach of the harvest, so universally allowed to be a time of hard labour, yet of high spirits, and ending in merry-making ; when the desired opportunity at length presented itself to me of leaving Ferlieknowes with an appearance of being constrained to it by circumstances, and I seized on it with great thankfulness.

One day on my return from church, two letters were awaiting me, brought up by Sandy from the village, where he had been : one from my uncle's clerk, James Cautious,—the other from Helen. James complained of bad health ; that his colour and his appetite were both gone ; and that he felt weak in the knees, and could scarcely stand a whole day's work behind the counter ; that he had had sea-bathing without its usual restorative effect upon him, and was now ordered into the country a few weeks for change of air, and I would, he hoped, ask Mr Meadows if he would, as a great favour, let him fill my place for a month, or so long as the good weather lasted, and hoped I would fill his place at home. Helen's letter was kind as usual ; she told me of all friends being well, and that Eliza had sent her best respects to me. She confirmed what James had said about his health, and hoped I would comply with his request.

I can hardly tell how happy these letters made me. I had now a fair pretence to quit the field with flying colours. I went to Mr

Meadows with the letters in my hand, and showed them to him. He expressed some regret at my leaving him, now that I was becoming so useful. At same time I am certain he had penetration enough to see how glad I was to go. Yet he kindly said, 'Perhaps I will soon have you over again if James gets better; so you need not mind taking your trunk with you for the present;' to which I assented. Mrs Meadows spoke in the same way.

While I was busy preparing for my departure next day, Mary told me she was going on a visit to Whitestane on the pony, and asked me to have it all ready for her by the time I was ready to leave. Whitestane was six miles from Ferlieknowes, and we had to travel two miles on the same road. She was a fine rider, and made a good figure with her black beaver and white veil streaming in the breeze. We went very slow, and she professed to be very grave; at last her mock gravity fairly gave way, and, looking quite in her usual arch happy way, she said, 'Well, Mr James, I have been trying to look as grave as yourself; but it will not do any longer.' Then bursting into her usual laugh, she continued, 'And do you really think, my lad, we do not all see how happy you are to get away? We have all been sorry for you this some time past; you were so dull. Na, na, James, there's nae sorrow in your heart. I know you better, my lad.' With that she shook her head in my face until her curls danced again, and was off, waving her hand to me and laughing; but the tear was in her eye as it certainly was in mine. If Mary Meadows had been my first lady acquaintance, I most certainly would have become her slave; but we all knew that my mind was fully and previously occupied. Nevertheless, I had a strong affection for her,—so sprightly, so cheerful, with so much good sense and warm-hearted feeling, and her fine taste in literature. I certainly loved her as well as if she had been my sister, and a little more. But Eliza's image was constantly with me in all my reveries and musings. She had a degree of feminine softness and sweetness of manner which Mary was too young yet to have acquired; and above all, the pensive mood in which I have frequently seen her was, above others, the favourite picture and position in which memory loved to call up her image. In fact, she seemed to me the very standard of feminine excellence. I had not seen, and therefore could not imagine, anything superior to her.

At that time there was, by arrangement, with Leith, a boat one hour before high-water; a boat at high-water; a boat one hour after

high-water. I thought I would easily catch the high-water boat ; but failing that, I would get the last boat : so I walked easily along, and when I came in sight of Pettycur, there was the boat, all sail set, leaving the harbour. I was a little struck as the crowd of spectators passing upwards eyed me : ' Lost his passage ! ' ' Five minutes sooner would have saved him.' I was astonished. Could they mean me ? At last, to make sure, I accosted an old boatman or sailor-like man,—

' When will the next boat sail ?'

' Not this tide.'

' Is there not a boat always at an hour after high-water ?'

' Ay, that's the regulation.'

' Well, then,' I said, ' will I not get that boat ?'

Eyering me contemptuously,—' And if there was a boat to sail an hour after this, whan d'ye think she'd land ?'

I did not speak.

' You see how fresh it blows from the west'ert, and the spring-tide, already turned, will be running like a mill-lade by then.'

' So you think she could not make a passage an hour after this ?'

' Ay, ay, she might make a passage, and land ye at Dunbar ;' and away he walked.

No help but stay all night. I was much mortified, but obliged to digest it. I returned to a little cottage looking into where the boatman slept.

On my arrival at Leith, I found James in the shop, looking much better than I expected, after what I had heard. He acknowledged that he had recovered a little during the past week. My uncle and Helen were at tea in their usual way. Uncle declared I was as hearty and as high-coloured as any Newhaven fisherman. It was perfectly true I was in vigorous health. If my country scheme did me no other good, it certainly renovated my constitution in a thorough manner. I remarked that I was glad to see James Cautious was rather improved in health since he had written to me. My uncle and Helen here exchanged looks, and she said he certainly was, she thought, a little better than when he wrote his letter. I felt a little uneasy. I was suspicious I had been played upon. After my uncle went out, I questioned Helen about the letter she wrote me, particularly why she smiled when I made the remark about James being so much better than I expected to find him. She was a little confused, and evaded my inquiries as well as she could. I next went to the shop, and find-

ing James alone, I began to examine him as to his health, saying he was so much better than I expected to find him, that I was quite surprised. He burst into a laugh, and said : ' Indeed, James, there's nothing the matter with me more than ordinary. The leg which used to be weak in summer is so yet, but no worse than usual.'

' Why did you write me such a letter about your health, when it was not true ?' said I, angrily.

He again took his laugh, and said, if I would look carefully over his letter, I would not find that he had violated the truth ; for that his colour certainly was gone,—' I have not had any for several years. My appetite was also gone—it is always so in warm weather with me, to a certain extent ; and it is true that the doctor did advise me to go to the country ; yet it was by a mere chance I met him. But the fact is,' continued he, ' that a correspondence had been going on between my master and Mr Meadows, who informed him at last that he was sure you were now tired of farming and hard labour—that you were very dull and sad ; and he said he was sure, if any plausible excuse could be formed to save your feelings, that you would be glad to leave him. So Helen and I wrote the letters, and I hope you are not angry, for we did it for the best ; and I hope, after all, you will let me have a week or two, for I have now been with your uncle many years, and never had ten days at a time to myself.'

It was no use to reply. I saw exactly how the matter stood, and had nothing to do but to swallow down and digest my mortification as quietly as possible. James had his four weeks soon after. He made himself as useful in harvest as his weak arm permitted ; and he returned home certainly much improved in his general health and appearance, and brought my trunk, with all my well-ironed shoes and agricultural appendages, along with him.

I saw Eliza a few days after my return, looking as well as ever, and we were at once on our usual terms. Her good sense taught her to forbear rallying me upon the failure of my project, and I thanked her in my heart for it. After she was gone, I found that the same unpleasant report awaited me, in regard that her followers and admirers were as numerous and as respectable as ever, and Mrs Winterman was as anxious to have her well settled ; but, added Helen, ' I do not think Eliza cares much for any of them,—at any rate, for the gentleman that she wishes her to marry.' My mind was now constantly contrasting Mary Meadows and Eliza Miller together ; both of them were highly

favourable specimens of female beauty and loveliness, but essentially differing in character. Mary was a gem of the liveliest colour,—a ruby sparkling with superior lustre. Eliza resembled one of a more delicate colour—an emerald emitting a profusion of pure soft rays, upon which the eye could rest long with pleasure. Such language must appear to any one, coming from an individual like myself, as affected, high-flown, and absurd.

In answer to this, I can only say that at this time of my life no language seemed too strong to me in describing female excellence. Happy period, indeed, when youthful hope and imagination make this world a paradise, and dress up those we love in all the fine colours of the rainbow, till they look almost angelic. If it were possible for language to bring back to me the same delicious feelings, which at that time of life play about our fancy and our imagination, I would write on and on, and would not care what others might say. They might call me silly; say my joys were imaginary—a mere delusion. I do not care for all that. It was a delusion conveying happiness. How pure! O that I could a second time enjoy such in all its freshness and fervour!

I was two months with my uncle ere I finally made up my mind what I was to set about next. During that time I was rendered very thoughtful by a clearer insight into the declining nature of my uncle's business. It was becoming very quiet. I had again the offer of being clerk to Mr Watson, with a salary of twenty-five pounds. I could not think of this at all, nor yet render a good reason why I could not; only I thought it abandoning my proper business, as if I were a broken-down character. I was solicited by my uncle to take a year of it at home; but by this time I had fixed my mind on Glasgow with as much pertinacity as I had formerly on my rural scheme; and my uncle was won over to acknowledge that certainly there was no place like Glasgow for my improvement and chance of rising in wages and rank if deserving. After my mind was fairly made up, I met Mr Stately's elder brother. He was manager of an insurance company, and highly respected. He stopt me, and inquired into my plans; and when he knew I was disengaged, he said I should just go back to his brother, who would give a handsome salary, adding that they had all a respect for me, and that I might expect they would do all in their power for me at some future period. I was extremely flattered by this notice from one so highly respected as this gentleman was. In

my disjointed way, I answered him that I felt the kindness of his offer, and was very much obliged to him for it, and would have been most happy to have gone back to my old place; but that now I had almost completed my arrangements for going to Glasgow, and as I had of late lost much time, I was anxious to go forward with what had been arranged, and try to make up. As I proceeded with my excuse, the expression of his face changed to a mixture of pity and scorn, and I hastily bowed, and left him. There was much latent pride in his character; but what cut me, was a consciousness that he was warranted in looking upon me as he did, from my foolish rural expedition. Yet never was a more invigorating cordial given to any man; it quite restored me to my self-complacency. I had now something to tell Helen and Eliza. I feared to tell my uncle; but when I did, he was not so urgent with me to take Mr Stately's place as I feared. When I look back upon it, I really wonder why he gave me so much of my own way. But he did; and although he allowed me all I asked from him, he spared me.

CHAPTER VIII.

MY PROGRESS IN GLASGOW.

I LEFT Leith very early in the morning, after a good breakfast. Coaching was very expensive in those days; so it was arranged that I should walk half the way; and I got a ticket assuring me of the preference of an outside seat, if there was any room in the coach at the time she came to her midway stage. I started three hours before the coach. I was a good walker, and in those days the coach took six hours to do the whole distance. I had half an hour to eat my bread and cheese, and cool myself, and there was plenty of room. I had had a fine walk in brown October; it was the tail of harvest; melancholy from the falling leaves all around, but satisfactory and comfortable to look at the stackyards.

The horses were pitiful, and it was the soft season with the poor creatures: they only trotted little bits of the road, which was more than one half of it covered with the new-fashioned macadamizing

small broken stones. It seemed to get dark all of a sudden as we entered the atmosphere of Glasgow. I was told it was the Clyde mist and the Glasgow smoke which made this fine mixture. We were an hour and a half behind our time; but no apology was thought necessary, it was such a common occurrence. I went first to the house of my father's friend, James Dainty. He was not come home yet, and Mrs Dainty scanned my exterior pretty closely; but as soon as she knew who I was, she threw aside all reserve, and got me by the hands, and shook them more than once. Frankness was her characteristic—rather the opposite of her husband, who was slow and taciturn; but before he came home, I had been made very comfortable by tea and herring, and a bit of cheese. I suppose she saw I was very sharp-set when she brought out the cheese. Got a nice little bedroom for me in the lane at two and sixpence per week, right above themselves. They occupied the ground floor. In short, I was quite at home; the children got round me in a most pleasant manner; and this was a good beginning.

Next day I went along to John Frank, and received an equally kind reception from him. He was one of those who had known my mother, and it was delightful to me to hear her praise. He was now in business for himself. His wife was a very kind, easy woman. 'You'll tak' your kail with us, and I'll wash myself, and put on my best coat, and we'll gi'e the shops a ca', and mak' a beginning, for I'm well acquaint in your line.' And so we did. The first shop we called at was that of Peter Crafty. He had one of the best businesses, although not the largest, in Glasgow. We saw him, and when asked if he needed a clerk or assistant, he answered, 'No, not at present. My principal clerk is unwell, but we expect him back next week.' He asked a few questions more; and, as we were leaving, he said careless-like, 'You may call again.' We called at many other shops, and could find no opening; but I was not discouraged, for I had yet my principal call to make, on which I had the greatest dependence. I had a letter from my uncle to Mr Richman, who had once been in Leith, although now in Glasgow. Originally a chapman or pack-merchant, he had, by dint of economy, hard work, smuggling in tea, tobacco, and brandy, amassed so large a fortune as to be able to build one side of a street, which, as he told everybody, cost him thirteen thousand pounds, and was named after himself. Everybody knew Richman. My uncle and he had had much correspondence. On one occasion he got him extri-

cated from an entanglement with the Leith Customhouse for a very light fine; and he had also collected the rents and looked after a property of his, which had now been sold, for all which, except little presents of tea and brandy, he got no remuneration. Mr Richman received my uncle's letter with considerable indifference, and, glancing it over carelessly, laid it aside, remarking, 'My man, you are come to the wrong hand when you come to me. I know so little about people in your line. I hope your uncle is well. If you can come and dine with me on Sunday at two o'clock, I will be glad to see you.' Such was my reception. I had really hoped for something very different; but I made as many excuses for him in my own mind as I possibly could. Perhaps he meant more than he said; perhaps he wished to surprise me; perhaps he had not really time when I called, or might have had a particular affair on hand which caused him to dismiss me so abruptly.

I had promised to go to my dinner, although I was by no means easy about spending the time of the afternoon church in this way. Yet I went, and was welcomed in such a way as Mr Richman did to others in ordinary—in a stiff, dry, and careless way. The company consisted of two elderly gentlemen, who had not been so fortunate in the world; but they had been early companions of his, and they dined with him every Sunday. He used them without ceremony, as his butts in conversation, interrupting them without ceremony at one time, calling them by familiar and diminutive epithets at another, and all under colour of frankness; while they always laughed at his jokes, and when forced to speak in contradiction of anything he had advanced, did it with humility, fear, and circumspection. He himself was the chief orator. He was a man of a coarse, stern, selfish character, and rather vain withal, as was evident from his favourite topics of discourse, such as relating how he had begun the world as a chapman, with only four pounds of capital,—how he had toiled, how he had smuggled in tobacco and tea,—the many dark nights he had been out,—his narrow escapes,—how his endeavours had been crowned with success, that he came at last to have one of the finest ships belonging to the port of Glasgow; this great man was his son, the other great man his son-in-law. He ran on in this way with me, I dare say much to the annoyance of his old friends, who had heard and knew of all these circumstances long long before; for no one ever made his acquaintance but was obliged to submit to this tax of hearing

him again and again describe his wonderful gettings on in the world.

When this topic was exhausted, the conversation became more general ; but it was very coarse, and almost indecent : partly, I suppose, because there was no lady at our table. His wife had long been dead, and his daughter married, and he would not be at the expense of a lady housekeeper, to plague him with her whims, as he said ; for they were all so fond of having their own way, and heaping unnecessary expense upon a man. But my own opinion was, that if he had been anything like as coarse in his manner to any respectable female as he was to us, his company, no one would have stayed a month with him. When I left him, not a single expression dropped from him indicative of a wish ever to see or hear of me again. I had intended to have asked him if he had any prospect of assisting me in getting a situation, but I was so disgusted with his manner that my heart rose at the idea. It occurred to me strongly that he meant to give me my dinner merely to save appearances with my uncle, and now, having done so, felt himself entitled to cry quits, as if a dinner which cost him two shillings was anything like an equivalent for the trouble of having half-a-dozen of tenants to settle and wrangle with for years. It was with feelings both of anger and disgust that I felt myself so unceremoniously dismissed ; I was very much out of humour also with myself. The wine had flushed and disordered me, and I felt ashamed and vexed that I had allowed myself to misspend the Sabbath afternoon in such a very improper way.

I now found it necessary to make a vigorous effort to obtain a situation. Mr Dainty could do nothing for me. He had no address to introduce me to any one, and no knowledge or influence with those in my line. Again John Frank resumed the field with me, and we took all and sundry in our way. Anything like a decent place would have been acceptable now, but we met negatives everywhere. John was vexed, and exclaimed, 'The like o' this, James ! clean defeat, man ; 'od I'm jist vexed about it ; but wait a wee, we'll no despond yet.' I wrote home and requested my uncle to call on Mr Stately, and get a written character from him, as I thought it might be useful. I got an answer without delay, and the character I required. At the same time my uncle requested me not to remain in Glasgow, but return home, for that I would yet get one or other of the two situations mentioned formerly. This was so far good, but I did not relish the idea.

In the meantime, my friends the Daintys had found out that an extensive dealer in a fine situation in their own neighbourhood wanted a clerk. The shop in these days was first-rate in appearance, full of fine showy goods, though not at all in my line; but I was so tired, I resolved to try for it, and called. The gentleman entered into conversation with me, and I handed him my written character. It was as follows:—

‘DEAR SIR,—Your uncle has this day informed me of your wish that I should give you a written character. It is with much pleasure I have to state that, during the four years you served me, your conduct was most satisfactory, and, in point of honesty and attention to my interest, unexceptionable. I therefore can with confidence recommend you to any house in want of a clerk or shopman. And if at any time I can serve you, I hope you will freely refer to, dear Sir,—Yours truly,

WILLIAM STATELY.’

The gentleman seemed satisfied with this character, and asked me what salary I expected. I had previously consulted with the Daintys, and we agreed, as things then were in price, that it would take £50 to keep me, clothing and all; so I answered him to that effect. He coldly folded up my character and returned it to me, saying, ‘You will not find it easy, sir, to obtain so much; it is out of the question in my business; half that sum is what I paid my last clerk.’ I said I did not see how I could live upon that sum. He answered with a smile, that many a one had to try it.

I was not a little mortified at this result, as the shop was so taking, and the gentleman seemed polite and respectable. But it was surely very rash and ill-advised on my part, unknown to my uncle, to think of changing from one line of business to another. It is what no one ought ever to do without a very strong case to justify it. For if a man cannot thrive by the business he has been bred to, surely he has much less chance of thriving by one to which he is a stranger. But I was the less to be excused, because I had two situations waiting my acceptance at home. I feel almost ashamed to write this.

After being nearly a month in the place, I felt myself fagged and dispirited, and I was afraid my friends were losing their good opinion of me. I was speaking in a despairing tone to my friend John Frank, telling him I had almost resolved to return to Leith. ‘Oh, by the by,’ says John, ‘did you ever go back to see old Crafty?’ I said, ‘No,

for I have no hope from that quarter.' 'Hoot, man,' says John, 'ye maun try; for old Peter is a curious body, and there is no saying, for his clerk was absent unwell; go at once and see; you are always going about at any rate, and he said you might call again.' I did so, and also put my character in my pocket, by John's advice. It was a piece of beautiful writing, for Mr Stately was a very showy penman; and altogether it was a document calculated to produce a favourable effect. When Mr Crafty recognised me, he said, 'What, sir! you tell me you have not got a place, and been in Glasgow idle all this time? I thought you had either got a place, or had gone home again. I must say it looks as if you were an idle fellow; and if you are, I would have nothing to do with you. You know I told you to call, did I not?' I answered, 'Yes, but I had not much hope from what you then said.' His answer was curious: 'There it is, now; that is always the way with you young chaps—all so slack in the twine—little hope! Why, a man like you, sir, out of place, should have called and called again, although he had no hope at all. I am afraid you are lazy, and I can tell you that such trifling would not do in my business.' At this I laid my written character before him, which seemed to please him, for he rubbed his nose, and said, with somewhat less asperity, 'I am in want of a clerk, but if I thought you were lazy I would not take you. There, then,' said he, 'is a pen and ink—let me see how you can write.' I was thrown into a state of confusion. What would I write? At last I saw a printed book,—a dictionary, and a preface of a grammar to it,—and I wrote ten lines about 'What is a vowel?' It was worse than my usual writing. Mr Crafty said it was by no means fine, but that my hand was not confirmed, and that it might improve by painstaking. 'What wages do you expect?' I was determined not to lose this situation by asking too much, and answered, 'I had been offered twenty-five pounds before I left home.' 'Well, then, if you choose to engage with me for two years, thirty pounds the first year, and thirty-five pounds the second year, you may come to-morrow morning. I would not take you for any shorter period, as it will take you six months to get acquainted with my books.' So it was settled; and all my friends said, it was perhaps the very best place in Glasgow to learn my business well in. We all agreed that thirty pounds was too small a sum to live upon; but I trusted if I could make it serve bed and board, my uncle would find me in clothes.

I was to breakfast early, and be at the counting-room as soon as there was daylight enough to see to write. It now wanted only six weeks from the end of the year ; the clerk had been away a month, and the need for a clerk was urgent, else I had not got the place. This shows that those who are in want of employment should not get disheartened or lose hope, but continue to call, and call, and call again. A man in earnest creates a favourable impression.

From this time, and for four months, I wrote from nine o'clock A.M. to eleven P.M. before we laid aside our pens,—only one hour of an interval allowed for dinner. There was a necessity for this extra pushing ; the books had not been posted for two months, and all the new year's accounts were to be made out in detail. It was really a busy time ; but I was very happy with Mr Bluff, the junior partner. He was a west-of-Fife man, had served an apprenticeship in Dunfermline, and then came to Glasgow to push his fortune. He had been seven years with Crafty, and though he was not a partner exactly, he got a tenth part of the profits, warranted not to fall below one hundred pounds, and which sometimes reached one hundred and fifty pounds,—the master not reckoning any interest on his capital ; and this was good remuneration as things went on then. Mr Bluff was always with me after shop shut, and at eleven o'clock the books were put into the safe. A bottle of London porter and one of Edinburgh ale turned over into a large jug, a penny roll, and a slice of cheese, formed our supper. We drew our stools to the fireside and had our crack. I was never later than midnight out of my lodgings. I liked this way of it very well, because it saved me from providing my own supper. In course of conversation I learnt from him, that when he was admitted a partner, he had only two hundred pounds savings from his salary at his credit in the books. Small as the sum was, Mr Crafty could not have had a better guarantee of his sterling and moral worth. His parents were humble and hard-working people ; and he had not yet forgotten his early habits, for he breakfasted on porridge and milk, with a cup of tea afterwards.

Bluff was an honest, unpolished, unassuming fellow ; would plod and work from morning to night, and all morning and all night if the business required it, and never say he was tired. He was always an hour in the shop ere he got breakfast ; always present at locking it up, and carried the key to his lodging right across the street, with Mr Symmetry the manager of our manufacturing department. He had

a pleasant homely way with him, which was prized by most of our customers, above anything bordering on affectation; and then he had such an excellent enduring temper. Every one called for Mr Bluff; English riders called for him; every customer called for him; Mr Crafty was continually calling for him; Symmetry wanted him several times every day, and all we lads ran to him for advice or explanation. It was Mr Bluff—Mr Bluff, all through the premises from morning to night. I had the good fortune to make a friend of him at once. I had only been fourteen days there when he asked me to his lodgings. He saw me constant to my duty, quiet, and anxious to go out and in without fuss, which he had a great aversion to.

Our manufacturing premises, which had been built by Mr Crafty, were just through a short avenue, and the messages and correspondence between these and the sale-shop were incessant. Symmetry, as I shall call him, presided over this part of our establishment. I never knew a man of more exact proportions, or better knit together; about the middle size; had a smart, clear, animated countenance, and quite a pleasing, modest manner. Ladies calling to see goods, who had known of him previously, invariably asked for him to explain to them as to the qualities, patterns, and fitness of the articles wanted. Gentlemen from the country did the same; they were never pleased without him, if he had ever been at their place,—he had such a neat, modest way of talking; and while doing so, was so graceful in posture, and, at the same time, stated his own opinion so clearly and decisively, that he contrived to fix them in one-fourth of the time that Mr Crafty or Mr Bluff could have done. Mr Crafty was most fortunate in these two assistants. He did not himself study his interest more than did these two faithful men. In their respective departments they were first in the morning and latest at night; seldom exceeding half an hour to meals if needed: a money-making time, indeed, it was for the old gentleman.

Like many fathers who have risen in position in the world, Crafty had sons with souls above trade. The oldest would be a doctor—an M.D.; the next would be a captain; the third, a lawyer; and all were gratified. The youngest son was anxious to be a sailor, but here old Mr Crafty interposed; his name-son, Peter Crafty, must come into and succeed to his father's place and business: he had reserved his firm in his own name, but 'Peter Crafty and Son' was always in vision floating in his imagination. Crafty and Co. would not look well, he thought;

Crafty and Bluff would not do ; and his youngest son was brought in by the head and shoulders, callous and careless, to learn a business which he despised as unworthy of his abilities and genius. He had been a year in the manufactory under Symmetry, and had been a source of great annoyance to him, doing every duty lying to his hand, or appointed for him to do, so imperfectly, that, as Symmetry said, he had been much more of a hindrance than a help, requiring more time and pains to complete his work and correct his errors, than would have sufficed for the whole from the foundation. Spouting at one time fragments of plays ; at another, trying to sing some popular song ; distracting the attention of those working around him ; and always deep in the mysteries of novel-reading. Little did his fond father think what he was doing when he sent young Peter to assist me. He felt himself degraded by it, and made himself very unpleasant, gibing at me continually, and especially if any one was by. A rascally porter would be detained, grinning, in the writing-room, while he amused him descanting on my person, my clothing, my very homely shoes and stockings, and my parents, even wondering what they were,—selling a dram, he supposed, about the shore of Leith,—and so on. I boiled under this, and would have beaten him almost to extremity if Mr Bluff had not convinced me that it was not worth my while, and advised me to despise him by silence, which would prove my greatest victory. We did fight repeatedly, but were impotent to do each other harm, there being no Mendoza on either side ; so it was a tussle and a tumble, and no result. Bluff enjoyed it rather ; for my opponent, young Peter, invariably showed the white feather, and made his escape. He lost two years of precious time idling about in this way. At last, Mr Bluff got irritated by his following him about and annoying him, and he hit upon a scheme which answered. He told one of our best customers how he was situated. ‘Leave that to me,’ said our friend ; ‘I’ll make old Peter pack him off, I’ll warrant you.’ So he threw himself in the way of our governor about seven o’clock P.M., the time he went to his toddy, and got an invitation to accompany him. ‘Do you think,’ said he, ‘you are doing Peter justice in keeping him at home ? He seems a lad of considerable talent. Would it not be greatly in his own favour were he to go to some of the large English towns for a year or two ? He would be obliged to exert himself there, and it would be sure to smarten him up, and give him new and correct ideas. It’s pretty generally allowed that fathers are not good appren-

tice masters,' and so forth. This set old Peter a-thinking; and when, on inquiry, he found from Mr Bluff that he had little command of him, and that he was often idle, Master Peter was sent away on his travels. I forbear to say where, but I was greatly relieved. It is quite true that, generally speaking, fathers are not good apprentice masters to their sons; and every one is the better for being in two places,—it enables him to compare and make improvements.

Mr Crafty had indeed little pleasure in his family. They did neither love nor respect him. Himself had prospered in the world, and he thought he was a pattern man. He was not a scholar; read very little; was a trimmer in his speech, suiting his sentiments to the occasion; cunning, but not wise; money, and the vanity of being considered amongst the cleverest men of business in his line, absorbed him. He gave his sons a college education, and had a governess for his daughters in his house, and an amiable young relative for a house-keeper, for he was a widower. But except one son, who died at seventeen years of age, and who was beloved of all his brothers and sisters, and sincerely lamented by his father, not one else could be called liberal or amiable. Mr Crafty perhaps never once thought his family were ill brought up; but if he had, he could not now help himself. He could not command their respect, and he could not win their affection. A purse-proud, vain, cunning, selfish man; all his family, as they grew up, were at him for money, trying how much they could get out of him, until met by a peremptory refusal. I may add, he was fond of his dinner, his wine, and his toddy.

About three months after the time I had dined with Mr Richman, as I was passing along behind the counter to the front-shop desks to get the day-book for posting, I was electrified by seeing him in close conversation with Mr Crafty. He bent his shaggy eyebrows upon me. I smiled and bowed. 'Oh, oh! is that you, Meetwell? Have you got a place here? Ah! I'm so glad of that. You could not have got a better place than in my friend's here. Mr Crafty has one of the best businesses in your line. Will you come to your dinner next Sunday, same hour?' I accepted of his invitation, and why, after my former reflections on misspending my Sunday afternoons? It was pride and vanity. Crafty, I saw, was close by, and I felt myself exalted by Mr Richman's invitation to dinner. I went.


In addition to the two old gentlemen whom I saw there the first time, his youngest son and a nephew were present. The discourse was pretty

much as I had heard at my previous entertainment. But I was rather surprised when Mr Richman began to question me very closely, with an appearance of taking an interest in my affairs. What salary I had? At what hour I went in the morning? When I got home at night? He then said, 'Do you not think these hours far too long?—and I am sure your salary is nothing like what you ought to have.' I said, 'No, it was not much, but I had been so long in obtaining a place that I was glad to get it, and tolerably well pleased, especially as it was a place where I could learn my business so well;' and I went on to describe how happy I was with Mr Bluff, stating also my enjoyment in the bread-and-cheese and porter and ale supper after our day's work was over, and all in so happy a vein, that Mr Richman was quite delighted. He drew his chair closer to me, and bending his heavy black brows, and twirling his thumbs, while his mouth was compressed, and his small black eyes sparkled, said, 'Ay, ay! I see you will not mak' sorrow to yourself out of nothing. Weel, man, I have a friend in a bank, and he goes to the office at ten o'clock, and stays there till four o'clock; and he goes back at six, and leaves at eight o'clock; and he thinks himself very hard wrought and ill paid, although he has ninety pounds a year—three times as much as you—and he is just the same age as yourself.' At this he darted his keen eyes full on his son, contracted his brows again, and fixing his glance for a minute on him, threw himself back in his chair, snuffed up the air, and twirled his thumbs energetically. So all this inquiry at me was meant to convey the more stinging a reproach to his son, who met it all by turning away a little from his father, and thrusting his tongue into his cheek, with a wink of the eye to his companion, his cousin. He took not the least notice of his father's satire. I did not feel easy under it, and left soon, and was never back.

CHAPTER IX.

SCENES OF GLASGOW LIFE CONTINUED.

MY first lodging was too far from my business—fifteen minutes of a hard walk. I now removed to one of five minutes', in the near neigh-



bourhood of my ever active friend, John Frank. It had a bad entry, but the house extended far back; and when you had gone in the narrow close, and up three flights of stairs, and through the long trance, here was my little dovecot of a room. The window looked into the garden of a well-known M.D.; a large well-laid-out garden, with eight fruit-trees in full blossom at the time I entered, and a fine variety of flowers in the border. The square centre was all green, and had a pleasing effect, especially after it was well washed by a shower. Many a pleasant hour have I spent at this little window in the spring and summer evenings, when it was light, at my coming home after shop shut, at eight o'clock, or half-past eight at latest. With my little window pushed up to the top, I have enjoyed the fading twilight hour in great perfection. All my circumstances were now favourable to tranquillity of mind. I felt myself happy in the society of my friends Dainty and Frank. I was happy with Mr Bluff and Symmetry. While old Peter seemed to respect me, all my fellow-shopmates treated me with kindness and regard, and encouraged me to stand up manfully against Peter Crafty, junior, and not allow him to trample on me. I was in receipt of a monthly letter from Helen; and there was always some notice of Eliza in it. I had pleasant subjects of meditation, in the soft sweetness of the hour, the gratification of sight and smell afforded by the trees and flowers below,—added to which, I was generally tired, and therefore rest was welcome to me. The novelty of my situation had not worn off, and all these circumstances put together gave to this time of my life a serenity, a sweetness and peace, which I look back upon with much satisfaction.

The garden, I have often thought, afforded me more pleasure, perhaps, than it yielded the proprietor. I delighted to see the children and young ladies in it, and witnessed their merriment with pleasure. How pleasant, on a Sabbath morning, to sit by this half-opened window! The unusual quiet of the city was of itself a treat,—birds fluttering among the branches,—the young of the family with bare necks and clean dresses, all so cheerful. To sit thus, book in hand to inspire you with suitable thoughts from time to time, and spend the hour of interval between your being breakfasted, dressed, and ready for the duties of the day, was truly pleasant, and I hope profitable.

On three sides the garden was surrounded by high houses, most of them let to lodgers; and from the open windows came, about these twilight times, the sound of a number of German flutes. I was in-

fected with the desire to be a performer on this sweet instrument. I determined to try: I puffed, and blew, and persevered, and having a good natural ear, I came at last to be able to play in such a manner as at times to please myself, but never durst play a note in presence of a judge. I was ignorant of the theory of music; all I attained to was a rude and imperfect practice. But at the lowest estimate, it was an innocent way of spending my spare time, which, at this period of life, is of considerable importance.

My lodgings were very comfortable on the whole; and the old couple, who never had any children, were decent and agreeable kind of folks. My landlady was an excellent and economical cook. Finding it rather troublesome to make my dinner separately, she offered me a share of such as they had to themselves for one shilling and eightpence a week, I furnishing my own bread. To this I could have no objections. After six weeks of a trial, she found it too tight a bargain; she said she would need two shillings per week; and at the end of six months she thought I should not grudge to allow her half-a-crown; to all of which I agreed, thinking that a man who breakfasted at eight A.M. and dined at three P.M., would eat fourpence farthing worth of anything that could be set before him. Neither did she lose by this arrangement, for the greater part of the dinner dishes were composed of oatmeal or potatoes, seasoned with onions. From these, with a judiciously selected portion of butcher meat, and a careful use of the fat of it, she made up as good substantial dinners as I at that time could have wished for or expected, and we had a wonderful variety. So much for good, cheap, ingenious cookery.

My weekly expenditure at this time ran near ten shillings a week, as everything was then high in price:—

	s.	d.
Two and a half quartern loaves at 1s.,	.	2 6
Seven mutchkins of sweet milk at 1½d.,	.	0 10½
One ounce of tea,	.	0 6
Quarter of a pound of sugar,	.	0 3
Quarter of a pound of butter, old weight,	.	0 4½
Dinner weekly, per agreement,	.	2 6
Washing and mending all my linen, stockings, etc.,	.	0 10
Room-rent per week,	.	2 0

In all weekly, 9 10

Observe, I made the whole of my breakfast and part of my supper (always of loaf-bread and milk) off bread, and this is the reason my

consumption of bread was so large. When to this is added mending of shoes, mending of clothes, postage of a letter now and then, and occasionally sixpence for a bottle of porter or ale, it is evident I was living quite up to my income, which, at thirty pounds of salary, was about eleven shillings and sixpence per week.

My landlord was the child of poor parents in the Highlands ; I will therefore call him John Hielandman. He was early put a foot-boy to a gentleman, then from place to place—latterly with a militia captain for a number of years. When he left the captain, he was so well pleased with him that, by his influence, he obtained his present situation as a superintendent of about ten workmen, his duty being to perambulate his district once a day, see that the men were all at their work, and draw and pay them their weekly wages. His walking varied from five to fifteen miles a day, according as his forces were employed in different places. His fixed wage was fifteen shillings a week. He had also perquisites,—although I do not know how they arose,—of about five shillings a week more. So this old couple lived very comfortably. He had been about fifteen years in this situation when I became lodger in the house. John was a little thin man, with a fine ruddy complexion, always very clean in his person, and with well-brushed clothes. He had no spare language when about his duties ; but moved from place to place with a manner as stealthy and jealous as a cat. He had a strange peculiarity,—whether it arose from being so long a domestic servant or not, I cannot tell ; but he had an especial dislike to any one looking him in the face ; he could not stand it, and averted his eyes immediately. His stock of knowledge was very limited. He read the weekly newspaper from end to end ; and though it was a week old ere he got it from his superior, John and his wife both were satisfied with it. He had never a book in his hand, except the Bible on Sabbath. I was useful to him in assisting him to make up his weekly account. I could do it in an hour, while it would take him six hours ; he wrote so slowly, and he was never quite certain of his figures. It was, however, with reluctance he employed me. Why ? Because I one day remarked, ‘ How is it, John, that some of your men are down for three, or four, or five days, and John Smith always full time—always six days ? ’

He looked at me, then at his wife, and then they smiled ; and he answered me : ‘ Oh, you know very well, James.’

‘ Know what ? ’ said I, really surprised.

'Oh, you know very well.'

The explanation really was, that there was no John Smith employed at all. There was a John Smith lived in the bounds, but he seldom wrought.

As soon as I fully understood this to be the case, and that this entry of 'John Smith, six days, fourteen shillings,' was a false entry, I was paralyzed. I did not know what to say, and I let the matter rest for a time. By little and little, I learnt that on the day the wages were drawn, John Hielandman walked quietly into his superior's parlour at 5 P.M., and, depositing the fourteen shillings quietly, got a glass of rum, and was off again without many words. This was a very serious affair for consideration. I had no doubt in my own mind that both the superior and my landlord had laid themselves open to be punished for fraud and embezzlement. I approached the subject gradually, and tried to reason him out of this bad practice. How many years it had lasted I cannot say. Once into the vortex of crime, how difficult to get out! The attempt to escape from this criminal practice would now evidently cost him his situation, his character, and render him, perhaps, a felon. His superior would affect virtuous indignation, and hunt him down. I felt very much for the poor man. I did not see how I could help him. Had I been as experienced as I am now, I would have counselled him to alarm his superior's fears that John Smith himself might come to the knowledge of it, and thus have got the criminal practice discontinued; for his superior held his office—a kind of sinecure—by patronage and favour, almost as slightly as John Hielandman himself. When I pressed upon him the sin and danger of it, and got him up in a corner, his answer, in substance, always was: 'God bless me, James, I am but a servant, I maun just do as he bids me. He told me to do it. He attests the account, and he gets the money. It is his blame altogether.'

'Oh, but John, you make out the account, and you sign it first, which is as much as to say it is all right; and you get all the money; you have no witnesses that you pay over the fourteen shillings a week to him; and depend upon it, if this comes to light, he will escape, and you will be the victim.'

This bred a little coolness, which was rather awkward; for I had to warm myself at their kitchen fire, or go to my bed cold. I was not asked again to help with the weekly account.

There are shades in crime as well as in virtue. I was sincerely sorry

for my poor ignorant landlord. He was a dependant and an inferior, and the crime he was committing was altogether for the advantage of another, who was an educated man. Perhaps I did not know all; but I said all I knew, except that John was fifty-eight years of age; and had he lost his place, he was not likely to get another. Beware of the slightest deviation from truth and honesty: for it is almost impossible to recover the ground you have lost. Had he at first affected not to understand what his superior meant, it might have discouraged him from speaking broadly on such a subject.

John's wife was nearly as old as himself. She had been a handsome woman, of which she still retained some appearance, although her cheeks were hollow, and she had lost several of her front teeth. She had an agreeable frank manner, a great flow of spirits, and what is commonly called a long tongue. This she frequently exercised on John, if he appeared to have got a drop on his way home from his day's walk; but she was always mollified if he could prove that he had been treated, and show the pocket-shilling unbroken. In our very small house, it was almost impossible to converse without being overheard. A kitchen, a room, and a dark closet, were all. She showed some disposition to domineer over me also; but my reserved demeanour, and her fear of giving me offence, kept her at bay. The extreme cleanliness of her house, and the excellence of her cookery, atoned for many faults. They both dressed well, especially on Sunday, which they kept with every degree of outward respect, by attending church, and reading their books at home in the evening.

After I got intimate with the old folks at my lodgings, they sometimes proposed that I would join them in a bottle of yill—so the gude-wife called it, for she was an east-country woman. I generally consented, for in winter their kitchen was my parlour: the quantity was two bottles among three folks, for the mistress got her share. After the good ale had done its good office on old John,—that is, raised his colour and raised his courage,—it made him talkative, especially if he had had a dram before, as sometimes happened. One of his best tales was as follows:—

'When we were in Dublin, James, I was very nearly sorted one night'—Here his wife would give him a pinch with her finger, saying, 'Tut, man, we've heard that story often enough already.'

John, looking fierce, 'Don't 'terrup me, woman,'—and resuming—'Weel you see, James, I was in Dublin barracks with the captain; it

was a terrible time—it was the rebellion. I was asked to go to a wedding four miles out into the country, and the captain gave me leave to go, but desired me to bring home his regimental coat from the tailor when I returned. So I went to the wedding, and nice fun we had, to be sure, and kept it up till three o'clock in the morning; after which I had to come through the city, because our barracks lay on the other side of it. I called at the tailor's and knocked him up, and took great pains to fasten the regimental coat under my own greatcoat, so as no part could be seen, which you know would have been very dangerous to me if any of the boys had got a sight of it. My word, James, they would have made short work with me over the bridge; I would have gone as sure as death, James.'

'What bridge?' said I.

'Oh, Bloody Bridge,' continued John, 'where so many of the rebels were hanged; and whenever any of the rebel chaps got a hold of any of our lads they threw them over the same bridge without judge or jury, and they were either killed or drowned, or both maybe. So you see, James, I was coming slipping gently along, and glad there was nobody in the streets; for all was as quiet as pussy, and I was very glad; but in passing on, I saw a fellow come out of a close and walk on slowly before me. So I walked on slowly too, but could not help looking behind me when I saw another come out of the same close, and he was following after me. I was feared enough now; for I had heard how they did; and I thinks, God help me now, or else I am a gone man. I plucked up courage and tried to pass the first man; but he laid his hand firmly upon my shoulder without speaking. So I says, "There's a fine morning, friend;" but he gave me no answer—never a word. The other now came up and took the other side of me, and he says in a whisper like, "Sure you're in a devil of a hurry, are you? don't you be quite so fast." Says I, "Gentlemen, I don't know what you mean; I am sure you can have no business with me." "You belong to the barracks," says he again. "No, gentlemen; I work with Mr Moore, tailor in Duke Street, a well-known person, and his wife has been taken ill, and I was down at Dr Meath's to come and see her." Now I knew both the tailor and the doctor, and any of them would have protected me. "It won't do," says the second chap; "you know very well we cannot go so near the barracks as that. We must overhaul you here; and if you make any noise, we'll soon stop your wind for you." So they led me into a dark close, and gave a particular knock and a low whistle.

'They waited a while and then repeated the signs, and still there was no answer; but, oh, man, James, if you could only think how my heart was beating and thumping all this time! You might have heard it,—I am sure I did. After knocking again, they cursed a while at the landlord of the house for a sleepy blackguard, and I took courage and said, "Gentlemen, if you please to go along with me to Widow Morum's, next street, I am acquainted there, and I will give you a stoup of whisky, and every satisfaction you can wish." They consulted together in slang jaw which I did not understand; and afterwards, when we were at a lamp, one of them took off my hat, and looked at me and my hat both. They then said, "Go to the house and we will soon follow." So I was soon there, and, on rapping in our own way, the door was opened, and there was both light and fire in the house. We had one stoup, and I ordered in another. All this time the chaps were conversing together. They seemed to have mistaken me for some one else, and only took a sly look at me from time to time. I drank to their good healths, and, filling up my neighbour's glass, I pretended to have occasion to step out, leaving my hat on the table. The moment I thought myself out of hearing, I off with my shoes and ran in my stockings with all my might through a cross street to the guard-house, only two minutes' walk off. "Corporal Spurdon," says I, "come quick with some of your fellows; there are two scoundrels in Widow Morum's who wanted to rob and murder me." By the way I said to them, "Be as quiet as possible till I begin to speak loud, then come in at once." Spurdon was one of the most powerful fellows in our regiment. "Keep back a little and be very quiet." So in I goes to my lads, and, taking up the whisky, drank to them again; but one of them, getting up, swore at me,—for they were enraged at having missed the man they expected,—called me a lousy fellow, and ordered me to strip off my clothes. I now spoke loud and angry like. "Gentlemen," says I, "this is too bad; I promised you one stoup of whisky, and I have paid for two." The reply was, "D— you, if you are a tailor I'm mistaken; you look more like a soldier in skulking dress." Then he laid hold of me to throw open my coat, and I cried out, "Help, murder!" Bang went the door, and Spurdon and three more advanced with fixed bayonets. "Do you surrender?" said Spurdon. The answer was dashing down the lamp; cries and swearing were now heard,—"Lights, Mrs Morum, lights!" Lights were brought, and the fellow who had knocked over the lamp was bleeding from a

bayonet-wound through his cheek ; the other was on the floor, knocked down in the scuffle and held there. Oh, man, James, if you had only seen the two pitiful-looking wretches after they found themselves grippit ! They said they had done no harm to any one, and that the soldiers had no right to detain them ; that they were in Widow Morum's because I had invited them in there to drink with them, and appealed to me if that was not the case. I charged them with wanting to rob, and perhaps murder me. Their hands were made fast, and they were taken to the guard-house. All the way they kept on protesting their innocence, and threatening the soldiers. As soon as we got there, a printed paper was put into my hands by Spurdon to read. It was a proclamation offering a reward for the apprehension of two individuals accused of various acts of robbery and murder. The moment I had ceased reading the description of them, all the soldiers cried out, "These are the men !" And then they were stripped of their clothes, and everything found upon them was ticketed, and an inventory made of it. What a lot of stuff they had about them, sewed into the linings of their clothes in every way you could think ! Watches, and rings, and jewels, and money, a pistol, and two dirks. The property found on them was enough of itself to condemn them. I waited until the guard was changed, and then I got back to the barracks.'

The mistress could contain herself no longer, and burst in—'Ay, ay, John, ye was aye a clever fellow, an tak' your word for't ; but, man, ye was sae fear't—ye had to ca' yersel' a tailor.'

'Tailor or no tailor, it's a God's truth I have told you,' said John ; 'it's as sure's death, James. The men were hanged about ten days afterwards, and the captain said I was entitled to one-half of the reward offered, which was one hundred guineas. But it was blood-money, ye see, James, and I would let none of it into my pocket, and the regiment got it amongst them. Widow Morum was none the waur o't, I assure ye ; but I was glad when we left Ireland, for some said I was a marked-out man amongst the murdering crew.'

This was John's best story. I have no doubt it was substantially true, but, from defects in memory, it may contain a few mistakes and errors.

I went on Sabbaths to church most regularly, sometimes with John Frank and his wife and family ; they attended the Establishment. At other times I went with Mr Dainty and his folks ; they were dissenters, and had left the Establishment recently for conscience sake. The

young people sang beautifully, and I was greatly delighted with the animation and harmony of their worship. I went also at times with one of the shopmen, Walter Vainman: he was about my own age, an active, fussy lad, very full of himself, but, take him all in all, very shallow. He kept aloof from me for six months, seeing Mr Bluff and I were so intimate. Vainman hoped, it was thought, to oust Mr Bluff; for as the latter was plain in his person, plain in his attire, and rather homely in his address, Walter was very showy in person—black hair, black eyes, and fine rosy complexion; very expensive with his tailor, and rich and showy in his dress; had an affected shuffling walk, prancing, and looking right and left with the air of a lord. All this was slightly ludicrous, and he was rather a butt for satire in consequence. His father had been a farmer, and when he grew old came in to Glasgow on a small reversion of seventy pounds a year. Yet Walter was proud, reserved, and high-spirited; he would have scorned any mean action, if he had seen clearly through it, but his understanding was none of the best. We drew together slowly at first, but liked each other better after we became better acquainted. Walter's family were Episcopalians, and this gave me insight into another variety of religious worship. It was absurd to think such a one as Vainman could undermine Bluff—he, the early and the late, the painstaking, plodding Bluff—who, for his frank, homely, unassuming manners, was the favourite of all. When Vainman had a customer in hand he needed one or two of the juniors to assist him, made a great noise, and de-ranked a great quantity of goods, which he left others to put to rights again.

A cruel practical joke was played off by general consent upon Walter, and I, from the expected fun of the thing, was a party to it. We had had a month of late work and extra hours, and we told Mr Bluff we would not stand it unless he would give us a supper in Dobbie's,—a well-known tavern. 'I'll gi'e ye brose,' was all we could get from him; and when, for the twentieth time, he said, 'No, no, brose or nothing,' we consented to accept of brose, expecting something better. A light whisper was circulated among all except Vainman not to bear too heavy on the brose, as there would be something better. Symmetry was with us. To Vainman's utter astonishment, thirteen little wooden 'caps' of brose were brought in on a tray, and a horn cutty to each. Some looked with rueful faces, but Bluff put the matter beyond all doubt by saying to the landlord, 'Dobbie, be sure and

have plenty of boiling water, and send us in a pint of your best Highland whisky, and a large bowl. I'll ring the bell as soon as we've despatched the brose.' And then there was such a smacking of lips, and clattering of cutties,—'Capital brose!' 'Capital brose!' 'Wha'll be done first?' Walter supped up his brose, though he could not fail to observe that none had supped out their caps but himself. The bell was rung, the brose was taken away, and now for the bowl of toddy. Enter the landlord with a boiled ham, followed by a beefsteak-pie and other good things, till the table was covered with all the *et ceteras* of a full supper. Walter looked ghastly; his stomach was full of brose—and of mortification. He knew that the shouts of laughter, renewed and renewed again, were at his expense. Why was he singled out for this insult? He must have felt it, but he did not show it; he sat still, and took his toddy with the rest, and seemed to forget it, as I am sure I did, but in reality he did not; and I never wondered why he spoke so bitterly of Mr Bluff.

Amongst his other vain follies, he had made known to us that he was in love; and we all, who chose to take the trouble, knew who was the favoured one, and in waggery some called her the red herring. She had a little black blood in her veins, yet a fine rosy colour shone out through it. Walter was no man of war, no Lucius O'Trigger, and therefore the more liberties were taken with him. She had rather a dark skin, but was a very winning creature; fine black eyes, and a slight blush of red over her brown skin, made her quite entitled to admiration. Walter had contracted a habit of sighing—perhaps all who are in love naturally do so! He indulged in it, and at last we thought ostentatiously so. His next annoyance was, that when we passed him or met him, each improvised a mighty sigh, with such doleful cadence that he could not but hear it. He tried to cure himself of this practice, but habit had grown upon him, and he often heaved up his sigh, and then, remembering himself, discharged it in a whistle. This was too good to escape notice, and soon the whole set of us were sighing and whistling; and even the smart, universally beloved apprentice boy, Jack, ventured to imitate us as Vainman passed. He could not stand this, but made at him: 'You, too, you little smatchet,' and tried to give him a slap on the cheek, but Jack evaded him, ducked, and ran laughingly away.

At one of our shop meetings Walter forgot himself, thus:—He was assuming a lead in the company that did not become him, seeing Mr

Bluff was in the chair. Mr Bluff reproved him for it in no very choice language, telling him to avoid being so forward, and to let those who were older than himself speak occasionally ; at the same time hinting that fine feathers did not make fine birds—a sneer at his extreme foppery. Vainman never could command his temper, and said that a little smartness in dress was nobody's business, so long as he was able and willing to pay for it ; that he knew individuals who held situations of trust and responsibility who went about as shabby and disagreeable to look at as a lamplighter, and it would take a nice judge if a stranger to say which was the one, which the other. These sayings were never forgotten altogether by the parties, although they proceeded no further at that time.

Walter's family, as I have said, were Episcopalians ; and when on a Saturday he asked me to go to chapel with them on the morrow, he did it with an air as if conferring a favour on me. However, I did not mind, for it was his way. I was glad to go, being anxious to see and know as much about religious matters as possible. I did not feel very comfortable during this, I may say, the first time I had taken a part in the Episcopal form of worship ; the flitting and changing so much seemed to me to detract somewhat from its effect ; yet I was rather overawed, on the whole, by the dignity of the service and ceremony. I did not think I could profitably join in such a mode of worship at all ; but I went again and again, and when I came to understand the system better, my liking to it was much increased ; perhaps the more by an opportunity of sitting near Walter's sister—a beautiful young creature of about fourteen years of age—and seeing and hearing her earnest, sweet articulation of the responses, and skilful singing in the chants and psalms. Sincere devotion is best represented by the figure of an earnest female.

I had no seat in any pew of my own, and I roamed about incessantly, and became fond of the novelty. I was often three times of a Sunday at church, yet not twice in one place. I do not know if this was wrong or not. It was an inquiring time of life with me. I became a disputant and critic in matters of religion, especially with Walter, who had all the arguments in favour of Episcopacy so well arranged in his mind, that at first I had no chance with him, and he put me to silence easily. But as, in war, the undisciplined party, who are easily defeated at first by the veterans, learn from experience and dire necessity to be more skilful, and rise to equal their antagonists, so it was with

me. I was soon able to give my friend Walter answers such as he was not well able to meet.

Being at my friend Mr Dainty's on a Sunday evening, I stayed a bit of supper, after which Mr Dainty took the family Bible, and read in it a chapter of the Old and another of the New Testament, then a psalm, not in metre. After this they sang four verses. When this was ended, the whole family turned round to the chairs they had been sitting upon, and knelt down. It was the intention of Mr Dainty that his daughter, then about ten years of age, should begin to pray; but she seemed disconcerted, perhaps by my presence, for she remained silent. Mr Dainty now repeated the first few words of her accustomed prayer, and she then proceeded, gaining confidence, until at last her young voice was quite steady. After this, a son of twelve, and then another of fifteen years, and, last of all, the father brought the duties of the evening to a close by a particular and expressive offering to God. I was not aware of Mr Dainty's practice in this respect when I agreed to stay supper, therefore my surprise was the greater; and when I left them immediately afterwards, I was quite entranced. I had a mile to walk, and as I went along I said to myself, in the language of Harvey—'Surely nothing on earth so much resembles heaven as family devotion!' The clear voice of the young people; the earnest manner in which they prayed for strength from above to enable them to resist temptation; for divine grace, that it might teach them to remember their Creator and Redeemer in the days of their youth; that God would continue to bless, watch over, and protect their parents, and that they might ever prove grateful and obedient children to them;—all this was truly beautiful and affecting to hear; and he who could hear them for the first time without being moved almost to tears, must have had a different nature from me. Then the singing was excellent; it was no measured formal ceremony, but was performed with skill, animation, and fervour.

Now, what effect has this pious tuition had on this family? Half a century has elapsed. The old folks are mouldering in the dust. One, out of a family of six, died; the survivors have carefully maintained family affection; all are respected and loved by those who know them; all of them maintain the practice learnt in their father's house. Errors and misfortunes they have not been exempted from; but their setting sun declines gradually and serenely towards the period of their rest,—

happy in the sympathy of one another, and in the love and respect of the worthy around them. It is not in my power to doubt that religion has been the chief promoting cause. Every time I have occasion to go to Glasgow, I visit the two resident there; and it always does me good to experience their courteous kindness, and witness the strong family affection and deep interest each feels in the other's welfare.

I wish I could quote many more examples like the family of Mr Dainty, but I have them not at hand. There must be an earnestness not to be mistaken; an honesty of purpose and of words shining forth in all that's said and done by parents; a tenderness of conscience pervading all. If there is not—if the youth see a trace of hypocrisy, hard-heartedness, or equivocation, they are sure to follow the practices and let alone the precepts. Happiness in this world, and a hope of happiness in the life immortal, will always go together. If children are allowed to grow up without a principle of love and reverence for their Creator being implanted in their minds, we may expect that they will give way to the worst propensities of their nature; which, if their constitutions are not ruined thereby, and their prospects in life blasted, will debase them in their own esteem, vitiate their minds far below the standard of a pure and virtuous tone, and render it exceedingly difficult for them ever to attain the height they have fallen from. I am induced to speak thus because the severe discipline which fathers and mothers used to subject their children to is almost done away with. The affections of children must be kept, or the parent will have no authority. Punishment will only harden; therefore accustom your children to love you, and look up to you for advice, for sympathy, for instruction, for amusement. Every parent can do this if he will spare time to live in his own home, identify himself with his children; and if this endearing connexion is once established, the fear of a father or of a mother's anger will generally be a sufficient restraint. Avoid the rod as much as possible; too frequently used, it raises the devil in the youthful mind.

Walter's sister Ellen, the youngest of the family, was about fourteen years of age. She was of an amiable temper, and had a handsome person, with a highly intelligent face, and an eye bespeaking goodwill to all. She was very much disposed to think deeply on religious subjects—far more than is common at her time of life. She was the favourite of the whole family; whatever differences might exist among them, they all loved Ellen. She was the focus in which the rays of

affection met, and all hearts turned to her,—a blessing on the house,—for if ever there were jarrings or a gloom arising from disobedience of the children, or tyranny on the part of the parents, she was always so cheerful and willing to oblige, that these disagreeable guests, jarrings, gloom, and ill-temper, stole quietly out of the room soon after she had entered it. But if there was one of the family who loved her, and was beloved again in a superior degree, it was my friend Walter; their souls seemed knit together. He spoke of her twenty times for once that he spoke of any other relation. I mentioned that her devout appearance at church was affecting, when, in the lowest pitch of her sweet voice, she said, 'Lord, have mercy upon us. Oh, Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace.' She seemed then, as I said before, the personification of all that was lovely and perfect in devotion. At home she was affectionate and gentle, assiduous in her endeavours to be useful to all, and constant in her household duties. She was not mirthful, but placidly cheerful; her smile had no archness in it, no satire. It was an evening sunbeam. In the lifting up of her beautiful blue eyes there was something which I cannot describe, but four lines of beautiful and well-known poetry convey my idea entirely:—

'And if tenderness touched her, the dark of her eye
At once took a darker, a heavenlier dye,
From the depth of whose shadow, like holy revealings
From innermost shrines, shone the light of her feelings.'

Such was Ellen. Too amiable, too gentle and delicate, too pure and hallowed for mixing in the rude jostling and interested contention of the world, and as yet sacred from its contamination in thought, word, and deed, it pleased God to take her to Himself, that such a fair flower might come to perfection in the paradise above. It was so.

Returning home late one evening from the milliner's, whose art she was acquiring, that she might maintain herself and help her own family, she was accosted by a young man who appeared to have been drinking; he said he would see her home, and offered her his arm, and drew near to take hold of her. In an instant she darted past him, and he took after her. I suppose, from all I have heard, he had not pursued her far, but she always thought she heard and saw him, and, unnerved by fear, she fell twice; but it is well ascertained that she ran the mile between the milliner's and home, situated among the last

houses at that suburb, in eight minutes. Walter had been detained late, and learning that Ellen was not come in, he had his hat on to go out and meet her when her sudden knock came to the door. The moment Walter opened it, she darted in, and turning, shut the door behind her. It was 'Let me alone a while. I was pursued.' She got a little water; but she sickened nevertheless, and vomited, and there was some blood. What a night of anxiety they spent! For a week she progressively recovered, but then wavered after that: and in a month a fear that a decline had begun struck poignant grief to every heart; and in two months more she had entered into rest, leaving this life, all its sweet ties and affections, joys and sorrows, griefs and pains, far behind.

It was painful to notice Walter's sufferings. For two months he would not hear of it; but then it could no longer be concealed. When at last he was forced to admit that death was slowly but surely approaching his dearly beloved sister, he would and did sit up the first four hours of every night with her, although there was another. She was fond of him to converse with her; and although she sometimes insisted on his going to bed, yet a mutual belief that they would soon be parted for ever made them spend every precious hour they could in each other's company; but it told heavily upon his looks and spirits. Formerly he had been noted amongst us for his high air; for, from being of a fine ruddy complexion, sparkling black eyes, and rather a proud look, he was now changed. His colour was gone, his eye was dull, his face thin and emaciated, inclining to yellow, and his whole person seemed wasting and shrunk to the shadow of what it was. Mr Crafty used to say he was the most active lad in his shop; and Walter, who was fond of praise, strove to maintain this character; but now it was beyond his power. Often, after having been addressed by customers, he would turn away as if to get what was wanted, and return in a moment, beg pardon, asking them to repeat their commands. Mr Crafty did not always keep his temper with him, and twice spoke severely to him, and used language which, had Walter been well, he would not have borne quietly. Mr Bluff explained to Mr Crafty what was wrong, when, of course, he excused him. Bluff felt deep sympathy for Walter also; but he had a strange way of expressing it: 'I say, James, I'm sorry for Walter, poor soul, he is so much cast down about his sister; and I do not wonder much at it, for she was a bonnie lassie, and I only saw her once. I never had a sister. I

have often thought how useful one would have been to me, and also to my mother, poor old body. You should tell Walter to take care of his own health, for he is looking very ill; and they say decline is smitting in a family.' Two days after her death, Walter sent for me. I was surprised at his appearance, for he seemed to have overcome his former dejection. The load of anxiety was removed from off his mind, his countenance was calm and composed, and he was looking better, having had two nights of full sleep. He told me he wished me to come to the funeral. I answered him that I did not think it was possible; for if Mr Bluff attended, I could not leave very well; Mr Crafty being from home. Besides, I had no black clothes, and I hoped he would excuse me. He overruled everything. He told me I need not be at a loss for blacks, as he could send those he had been wearing for his uncle to my lodgings, and they were quite good, not having been on above a dozen of Sundays, 'for,' added he, 'I got a new suit on this melancholy occasion;' but observing me reddened at the prospect of going to a funeral in borrowed clothes, he added, in a soft voice, 'If you please.' And he then hastened to say that the reason why he wished me so particularly was, that his sister and he had arranged some days before her death whom she would wish invited to the house to hear the burial service read at her funeral; and she had mentioned me as one, expressing, at the same time, a favourable opinion of me as a thinking young man; and that although I did not belong to their church, she said she was sure I would like to be present at such a solemn and impressive service: for her mind was clear and her articulation perfect to the last.

I now agreed at once when this was stated to me; for I was deeply moved and gratified by the kind remembrance of one so amiable as Ellen. As I was about to leave the house, Walter stopt me in the lobby, and, opening a door, waved me to follow him, which I did. It was the chamber of death. I advanced with reverence to view the remains of this beautiful young creature, now laid out in a bed all covered and hung with fine white linen. It was a solemn, yet a pleasing scene: beautifully tranquil even in death. She seemed reposing in quiet, now that the struggle was at an end; the same expression of countenance as when alive; her eyelashes cast down so modestly, as was her custom in life, gave a delusive appearance, and favoured the idea that it was only repose. So light was her person, that it seemed as if all mortal particles had been refined by distress,

and carried away from it, leaving only a pure transparent frame, fit for the habitation of a glorified spirit.

I need not describe the ceremony gone through at the funeral, but I was greatly impressed by it,—so grand, beautiful, and comforting.

CHAPTER X.

GLASGOW SCENES CONTINUED.

AFTER I had been a year in Glasgow I found that my clothes were getting all worn out together. I managed to get new vest and trousers; but the coat was quite above the compass of my purse, as my salary was quite eaten up. So, without much hesitation, I wrote my uncle, and told him how I was situated. That very day fortnight I received a new bottle-green coat with plated buttons,—so active were their wishes in my behalf,—and accompanying it was a square bottle of whisky that I might treat my friends, half a cheese, two pairs of stockings, with a large kind letter from Helen, and a few lines from my uncle.

In a week after, it being Handsel Monday, Mr Crafty made me a present of a five-pound note. I was sure Mr Crafty would not have made me the present without consulting Mr Bluff; and I felt elevated in my own eyes, because it must have been bestowed on me as the reward of merit. What pleasure I felt I am sure was warmly participated in by Helen, to whom I wrote a long letter in answer to hers, and sent a present of a silk handkerchief; and to my uncle a polished leather snuff-box with a silver shield on the top, with the initials G. M. in old black letter, and full of Glasgow rappee; all of which gave entire satisfaction. In this period of my life I now experienced hearty and substantial pleasure. The world was kind to and happy with me. I had the approbation of my own heart, and all was right. If I were a good hand at the pencil, as I am not, I think, even at this distance of time, I could make a particular sketch of myself, my friends, the street lights, etc., and all the bustle of the carrier's quarters, as I deposited with him the box containing, in addition, a large currant-loaf, sixteen pounds weight, and other things. I can

recall the sound of the Glasgow bells, see the crowded streets through which, with a heart as light as a bird, I made my way home.

I next invited all my friends to my room, in the generosity of my heart, to taste my cheese and whisky. They came at eight and remained till eleven,—the Daintys, the Franks, Mr Bluff, Symmetry, my landlord, and his wife. We had a very merry night, and discussed half-a-dozen of ale, the half of my whisky, bread, cheese, and a two-penny pie each. Our exhilaration and joy were quite spontaneous. My little room was full for once. And here I may take occasion to say, that the satisfaction I enjoyed in these trifling events served to convince me that there is a wonderful degree of equality in the happiness of mankind among all the various conditions of the human race.

During my second year's sojourn in Glasgow, Mr Stately, my apprentice master, gave me a call, for I was in the habit of transacting many little bits of business for him. I got leave of absence for the day, and conducted him through various quarters of the city, while he tried to do some little business for himself; but, it being chiefly an endeavour to collect some old bad debts, he was not very successful. He asked me to supper to the Swan Hotel—I think that was the name—then one of the finest in Glasgow; but it was not called hotel at that time, only inn. I found he was one of seven Edinburgh and Leith gentlemen, who pretended to be on business, but were in reality out for a spree. The whole complexion of the party told so plainly. There was the printer, with his quips, and cranks, and sniggering laugh, never quiet; the jeweller, speaking pure and unadulterated nonsense; the draper, a fast man, a swell, an accomplished fellow, a beautiful singer; the clothier, a pompous, good-looking, stiff-backed chap, laughing, in his patronizing way, the more, the less there was to laugh at; then the vain-glorious saddler, aping a grand character, and mouthing his words, having been years in London, and there got his tone; next the little clothier, or merchant tailor, a small, good-natured creature, not to be excelled for snuffing, drinking, and tee-hee giggling; lastly, the rich druggist, with his coarse fun. Such laughing, singing, joking, quizzing, and drinking followed supper, that I was fairly astounded. It was the first time I had been in such company, and I found their style was far too high pitched for my grave temper. There was rather too great a tinge of the *blue* run all through it. It was two o'clock ere I got home. Frequently, in the course of the

evening, when the fun was at the wildest, Mr Stately, as if really half-ashamed of his associates, would exclaim, looking at me, 'Come, come, lads, behave yourselves; you see you are making James look quite grave,' which only augmented the noisy laughter. I was with them again next night; but they were now, as we say of a plant that has been pulled for some time, dowed and drooping. This was their third night in Glasgow. I got home by midnight, but slept in again, as I had done the day before. Mr Bluff was rather angry at a second offence two days running; but when I informed him that the party were all leaving for home that day, he was pacified, and said, 'I'm glad of it, for if that 'prentice master of yours had stayed long here, he would have played the very devil with you, and led you off your feet.'

My two years were now nearly expired since I came to this place, and I had only had slight passing notices from Helen of Eliza: that she was not married was enough to keep my mind easy. But I had now acquired a much greater degree of confidence in myself, and had risen in my own estimation so far as to think the day might come when I would, without any very great presumption, consider myself as a suitable match. Under these feelings, in a postscript to one of my letters, I added: 'My kind remembrances to be presented to Eliza, if she still thinks of such a humble friend.' Shortly after, in a letter from Helen, my message was replied to, and my compliment returned in a manner so kind and affectionate as moved me strongly. From that hour my thoughts of Eliza, which had been of a cold and speculative nature for some time back, became quite engrossing. I had seen no one in Glasgow—Walter's sister Ellen excepted—who had affected me; and she was too young, and of too exalted a character to have inspired warmth.

From this time every favourable and every tender thought which I had previously entertained of Eliza sprang up afresh in my mind with such luxuriance as almost wholly to engage my leisure hours. Day by day I walked in this the garden of my imagination, in all my spare minutes my mind turned as naturally as could be to indulge in dreamy fancies. I thought it was possible she might remain unmarried for a few years yet; and because this was possible, I built upon it as if it had been an ascertained certainty. I pictured her afresh in her absence; I called memory to my aid, and imagination outdid reality.

I must here record the loss of one of my companions. Walter was called away to open shop in Dumfries. An old-established dealer

in our line was giving up business ; and his relations, who had great confidence in him, thought it an excellent chance for him. The retiring merchant had made a small fortune of four thousand pounds. Nearly six months after, I received the following epistle from him :—

‘ After four months of bustle, settling terms, taking inventory, and correcting errors, cleaning, painting, etc., I have now set me down a humble burgess of this place. The premises I have gone into are not showy ; but as my predecessor has done good in them, surely I may hope to prosper also, for I should think I have several advantages that he did not possess. Yet I doubt now, when I have got time to cool and look fairly around me, whether I have not paid too much for the whistle, for we took the whole of the old gentleman’s stock and shop-furniture without reserve at a valuation. I am not half so sanguine as I was at first ; for, to tell you the truth, both my uncle and myself were too eager to close the bargain, the trade of the shop having diminished by one-third. At its best the sales only reached five thousand pounds per annum, of which one thousand pounds was cash retail. The fixtures and old stock amounted to six hundred and eighty pounds ; and although I have advertised to sell at very low rates, and although many have called, yet few take *old* stock. I fear so far we have made a mistake, and that it may be years ere I can convert it into cash. And besides this, I was obliged to take the house along with the shop. It is a small house, and my eldest sister keeps it for me. Of course I had to furnish it ; and do as I would, it cost me one hundred and twenty-five pounds. I know you will be saying to yourself, What about the “green lintie ?” You raised that name, you scamp ; but really, James, I must pause a little before I can take her home,—at least twelve months,—and bend all my attention to try and make up my business to a better amount, and gain the good opinion of the good folks here as well as to please my friends. You know the “lintie” will not come alone ; and that she will enable me to pay up all friends, and also to buy my goods for cash, and have no bills—that is, with good management. It will need all that, for one thousand six hundred pounds, although very handy, is not a great fortune. Heigho ! James, I sometimes weary a little here, and I often think of the cheerful conversations we used to have round your desk in the afternoons with Bluff, Symmetry, yourself, and your humble servant, sharp and witty as they were. What is old Crafty about ?—but I need not ask ; scolding and calling names as usual, I suppose.’

About this time my uncle took the resolution of paying me a visit. Old Mr Crafty did him the honour to spend two hours with him over rum and water. They had much in common, both having been bred to the same branch of labour, and both having risen from the ranks. I felt very much gratified by this notice of my uncle. He called next day on Mr Richman, but declined the honour of dining with him as proposed,—feeling cooler towards him on my account. We spent the evening with John Frank. Dined next day with Mr Dainty's family, and were very happy. At parting next day, with his usual kindness, he made me call in my weekly bill, and paid it, as he had occasioned me some extra expense; and he gave me one pound besides to buy, as he said, a pair of new trousers. In walking along to the coach-office, he gave me some serious advice to be guarded and prudent in my conduct in such a wild place as this Glasgow appeared to him to be.

For some time I had been dissatisfied with the familiarity with which my landlord and landlady now treated me; they almost expected, as a matter of course, that when I came home while they had any of their friends in the house, I should pay my shilling, take my share, and be Jack-fellow with them. I felt rather degraded by this. Besides, they required my room so very often that it was annoying to me. I was the less able to resist these encroachments, seeing that every night in winter I was at their fireside. I could not afford fire in my own room: but I felt very uneasy, as they sometimes went deep into the tippie, and the talk was somewhat coarse. One night I was told that an old crony, Alick, a serving man, of fifty years, was to be two nights out of a home in changing situations. Extraordinary apologies were made for asking me to give him a share of my bed. I did not see well how I could refuse; and yet he was a disagreeable person to look at. True, he was remarkably funny, but he wore a wig, had a blush-red face, and unpleasant-looking eyes. I was always fastidious about sleeping alone; most particularly set against sleeping two in a bed, if by any means I could avoid it; but I could not on this occasion, and so I submitted with a bad grace. To crown all, some hints fell that my man would maybe be back to claim the same privilege. I decided, and prowled about for a week, and got another room,—an attic with a very good street view, four pair of stairs up. On the Saturday I told Mrs H. that I would remove that day week. If I were to say what an effort it cost me to do this, I would hardly be believed, for both of them had a great regard for me.

At last it was out ; she gave me a quick glance of a reproachful eye : ' Ay, ye're growin' big noo, our poor way winna do wi' you.' ' Nay,' said I, ' really I think you would need all the house to yourselves to be comfortable, and my two shillings a week will never be missed.' We parted on the best of terms-after all.

My new landlady was an old maid of sixty,—a decent body, but not a good cook, nor yet over cleanly ; and my bill was three shillings a week more than before, which was rather serious, and indeed made me almost regret that I had left my first lodging, until I remembered that it was absolutely necessary. People are well off who can at once state what pleases and what does not please them ; and if I had done so with my first landlady, and given her another sixpence a week, we would perhaps have remained long enough together. This qualification I did not possess. I could not remonstrate till I had to some extent lost my temper, and then a quarrel was inevitable, or part—which latter alternative I chose.

Having now a little money to spend, I planned a visit to home, and Mr Crafty reluctantly allowed me leave of absence for a week. I meant to have walked all the way, and thought that by starting very early I would make it out. The weather was quite fresh, the roads soft, and I found out that walking so far in one day was beyond my power. When I had made twenty-five miles, I was at the village where Mr Bluff always stopped—a secondary kind of house. It was now quite dark. I knocked three times ere I got any answer ; then the old lady herself opened the door a very little, and standing close to it with a light in her hand, asked what was my pleasure. I said I was a traveller, and wished to stop all night. She demurred, and said she was not fond of lodgers all night, and that I had better go to the next inn, it was only two miles farther on. I said I had made up my mind to stop at her house by the recommendation of Mr Bluff, of Glasgow ; and I added some particulars as to his relations, who lived not far off. She now asked me a few questions about Mr Bluff, and then she said, making way,—' You may come in and rest you, at any rate, till the lasses come in.' She showed me into the kitchen, and, giving me the light, left me. On examining myself in a large common looking-glass, I found then how pale I was, how bespattered with mud, my neckcloth all awry, and I did not wonder at the good woman's caution. By looking about me I found basin and water, soap and towel, and had a most thoroughly refreshing wash of head, hands, and

face. I brushed up my hair, turned out my new watch-ribbon, gold seal, and key to view, and felt assured I would be allowed to remain. The two maids had been out at the mangle; they seemed shrewd, lightsome damsels; put a dozen of questions to me in a very cool, easy way; and being satisfied from my answers, a fire was kindled in the parlour, and I was treated like a gentleman. Tea and meat, one shilling, at seven o'clock; one gill of toddy, ninepence, at nine o'clock; breakfast, one shilling, at seven A.M. next morning; bed, one shilling;—three shillings and ninepence in all. Never was better or cheaper lodged in my life; left ninepence for boots,—four shillings and sixpence the total. These were the days! The landlady called in after I had finished tea, and made an apology; but she said they had to be very cautious as to admitting strangers.

How my heart beat and bounded as I drew near home! Eliza Miller,—the name, the theme, came betwixt me and everything! I was in my uncle's in time for dinner, but so tired that I was almost ashamed of myself, and actually did not stir out that day. But what long fireside cracks with Helen! Tears of pleasure often seemed to come into her eyes when she looked at me,—so much altered in person and manner, spent as I was; nor could I refrain from giving her my sincere sympathy, when I contemplated the change upon herself,—for a dark cloud of grief seemed to hang heavily over her, which I could not account for. Kind and considerate as she always was, she informed me all about Eliza Miller; and above all, that she was still in town. This gave me immediate relief, till a damp came over me as the thought rose that she might not care for seeing me now, after having, as I had no doubt, been accustomed to so much gay company. Helen roused me from my reverie: 'Could I not call on Mrs Winterman and Eliza next day?' Of course I could. I was now full of hope and fear, shifting from side to side every hour.

Miss Miller was absent when we called, and we were subjected to Mrs W.'s company two hours, in hope of her return, but she did not make her appearance. I was exceedingly restless, and looked to the door as it opened and shut. Meanwhile our landlady, who was excessively fond of news of every sort, and had also an inveterate habit of alluding to all events of a disagreeable nature, whether present or past, questioned me without interval all about my master, my salary, my companions, my lodgings, and so on; and having exhausted her queries to myself, she next attacked Helen, and engaged her in a dis-

course concerning my uncle, by which means she contrived to let me hear of his increasing irregularities, his decaying trade, his scarcity of money, and the short temper thereby engendered; all which was extracted from poor Helen under the mask of sympathy and friendship and whining condolence; the pity for him,—‘He was such a fine man,’—‘He was once so respectable;’ and it was so mournful to hear him spoken of as he was. And then she instanced what Mr A. and Mr B. had said of him to her. This course she pursued and prolonged to our great pain. Then came an allusion to Miss Miller as if about to be married; and that although we could not see what might happen her in the course of her lifetime, yet she would be very well off. All which discourse was wound up by a satirical allusion to my failure as a farmer. She always asserted that she told the truth. ‘It is God’s truth,’ was her common expression when no one was questioning it, as half an apology for the unpleasant nature of her insinuations.

I questioned Helen, the moment we got out, what she could mean in her allusions to Miss Miller. This she explained in as slight a way as she could manage; it was, indeed, the old story. Mr Homespun, the rich, the full-grown gentleman, with the large bunch of gold seals, was still regular in his attendance at Mrs Winterman’s, favoured by her, but kept at a distance by Eliza, who seemed to have some aversion to him; and this had been the cause of many bitter arguments *pro* and *con*. Riches covered every fault in Mrs Winterman’s eyes, even the disparity of years,—Eliza being twenty-one years of age and he forty. But for all that, I could not really be certain that Mr Homespun’s suit would not succeed. In truth, I had a conviction that he would gain in the end. He was a man of fair character, a rich money-making man, as I have said, and rather reckoned good-hearted amongst his relations and dependants. Then Mrs Winterman cautiously advocated his cause; and as Eliza was a dependant, I could see no other issue. When the thought flitted across my mind that I should avow my love,—I, a poor clerk lad, of forty pounds a year,—it struck me as being so ridiculous that I hastily dismissed it. But I had little time to carry on my sombre train of thought at home, for ere the tea equipage was fully on the table, Eliza herself made her voice heard as she entered. My heart leaped at the sound! We appeared mutually conscious of a great alteration in each other’s personal appearance since we last parted. I was pleased at the additional degree of respect with which Eliza addressed me, but the frequent and ap-

parently involuntary use of the word 'Sir' rather chilled me. On my part, I believe I gave offence by my distant manner; for the news I had that day heard had prevented me from meeting her with that buoyancy and warmth of manner which I could have wished. Besides this, there was such a difference in her person and manner, that it somewhat overawed me. The girlish bloom and the sprightliness of language for which she was before eminently distinguished, had given place to a shape of more mature womanly beauty, more reserved conversation, and a more thoughtful tone.

In short, my feelings of respect and admiration were increased at the expense of my hopes; for the effect of our first interview was to render us both more formal towards each other than we had ever been before. Helen and I accompanied her half way home. At parting, I asked when I would have the pleasure of seeing her again. She hesitated to answer, and I felt a glow of confusion spreading over my face at the glance with which she regarded me, being as much as to say, 'Do you really wish to see me again, or is it for form's sake you ask?' I presume she was softened by observing the confusion I was in, for she answered: 'Mrs Winterman is to dine out by appointment to-morrow; the old man and Charles (the son) will be at home, but they are both such good creatures, I make free with them at all times. I was asked to go to this same dinner, but declined, as the gentleman who gives the entertainment is a widower, and once offended me. If Helen and you can come to tea we will all be glad to see you; come early.' What a reaction in my feelings! I was relieved; I breathed freely. I could not have done what she did so handsomely.

But to turn to a painful subject,—what with mason-lodges, corporation entanglements, and benefit societies, my uncle had become almost a victim to a number of parasites who preyed upon him, on one pretence or another, continually. They had him in a net as it were. If he had had courage to relinquish all connexion with these societies and these people, he might have easily done so; but these trifling matters had become the business of his life, and these flatterers his daily companions. In one respect James Cautious was of the greatest advantage to him; but the help had had this unfortunate effect, that by degrees he had become quite idle, doing nothing to his own business—his shop becoming only a rendezvous to talk news and politics. Worse still, he was now rather noted as a dram-drinker; yet still so good-humoured, so honourable, so generous far beyond his means, that

he was quite a privileged individual. All this was patent to Jamie, who complained to me, with tears in his eyes, that it would not do long; for that travellers, knowing that as yet they were sure of their money, had found out his weak side, and by giving him his meridian, his dinner, or his supper, cajoled him into giving large orders, often for goods of which he was overstocked; and that, by what he had learnt from the young men of the neighbouring shops in the same line, my uncle was paying more for some sorts of goods than his brethren were selling them for. And further, that trade with them was getting less and less in amount; for if they lost one old customer, they seldom made a new one; that their ready-money sales were very much fallen-off indeed; and, what he, James, considered worst of all, my uncle was getting short of cash, being often without one shilling in the bank, and of course obliged to give bills for two and three months, by which he lost his discount and injured his credit.

This was heavy news to me; my spirits sank far below par; and all those pleasing thoughts which had made me so happy when I meditated on Eliza's invitation for to-morrow, were quite extinguished. But in order to obtain certain information, I pretended weariness after supper, so as to induce my uncle to go to bed; for which, in truth, he was ready enough, honest man, the more by token, that he was under the effect of his habit. With all her disposition to explain every circumstance in the most favourable point of view, Helen confessed that all that Jamie had said was too true. I could see tears dropping over her cheeks, and there was an involuntary and mechanical wringing of her hands. Alas! alas! when Helen spoke thus, things were far gone indeed. The additional particulars she gave me were these: My uncle three or four days in every week was engaged to dine or to sup either with travellers, who contrived to make him pay for it, or at masonic meetings, or at some club; or else was engaged with some individual who had a point to carry; and it was always late, sometimes very late, ere he reached home. Some one, out of deference to his years and character, always came home with him; and if allowed to sit down in his chair, he would fall asleep, so fast that she could not awaken him; and then next morning he was so cross and morose that he grudged her even the necessary money for ordinary household expenses.

All this she related to me with tolerable composure, and it seemed as if her complaint was ended, for she stopped. I looked at her. 'I do not like to tell you any more,' said she; she seemed as if her heart

would burst. 'My father scolds at me now,' she continued, 'and calls me names, and sometimes he swears; and the worst of all is, he does not regard the Lord's day, as he used to do.' At this part of her narrative she sobbed bitterly, and I groaned aloud. The sleeper was aroused to say, 'Are ye not to bed yet?' and we hastily made exit.

To bed—but not to sleep; my heart was full; I had a heavy subject for meditation. My once excellent uncle was now in the steep sloping path which leads to sure ruin; even destruction was already in view, and at but a short distance. The only friend I had to look to for help when the time should come that I might with propriety begin business for myself, rapidly wasting his means, and throwing away the excellent character he had so long sustained; Helen's unhappy state herself, and mild advices set at nought; she, whose delight it was to be generous to the poor, now put to shifts herself: what a change! These meditations cost me four hours of my sleep, a circumstance unprecedented in all my former life. Nor need I enlarge on the painfulness of these thoughts; they came up phase after phase in new combinations of bitterness, and my happy acquaintance with Eliza seemed at an end. The clock struck twelve, one, two, three, ere I was in oblivion.

Next day I called on Mr Stately, who received me with much kindness and respect. He asked me to come and take a glass of punch with him in the evening, which offer of course I accepted. In the interim, Helen and I were at Mrs Winterman's a full hour before tea-time; but how different were my feelings now to what they were twenty-four hours before! At one time I had indulged hopes of a copartnery with Mr Bluff, and expected my uncle could have perhaps given me five hundred pounds. These hopes had all perished for ever. All my aspirations were utterly blasted, and I could not conceal from myself that it was my duty, however painful and mortifying, to try all in my power to save the wrecks of my uncle's estate, and, if possible, secure to him and Helen at least a decent living during the remainder of his days. In following out this train of thought all my gay visions fell to the ground. I was only to be an appendage to an old man, broken down both in circumstances and character;—down, down sank my spirits to the lowest pitch of dejection, and in this state of mind I was ushered into the presence of my friend.

Helen, either by chance or design, soon left us. Eliza despatched Charles to some employment he liked; and the old man, who was always very deaf and hard of hearing, was no hindrance to our con-

versation. After a few commonplace questions and answers, Eliza, with that tenderness of manner which was peculiar to her, begged to know if I was well enough, for she knew a great alteration in my appearance since yesterday. I thanked her, and answered her that I was in perfect health. She smiled incredulously, and seemed dissatisfied, yet manifested so tender an interest in my affairs that in a moment I found it impossible to resist the sweet consolation of making her my confidant. Accordingly, for a full hour I unveiled my whole heart and mind to her; talked of and pitied Helen; spoke of my uncle, and hoped that surely it was possible to redeem him. I told her how happy I was in my Glasgow situation with Mr Bluff, and other friends whom I named, and even mentioned the hopes I had indulged in of partnership with that gentleman; that I was unwilling to relinquish all these fair prospects, but yet that something must be done in my uncle's affairs, or that they would come to ruin speedily; and, in conclusion, that I was utterly at a loss what to do.

All which she heard with patient attention, sympathizing with me, and, to my surprise, seemed better acquainted with all these affairs than myself, for Mrs Winterman's prying curiosity had enabled her to pick up many particulars both from Helen and others. She even explained many things to me, and seemed not to think the state of my uncle's affairs half so desperate as I had supposed, and mentioned how and what Mrs Winterman and herself thought should be done whereby he might be ensured of a living, and his trade reclaimed from decay, and even perhaps restored again. The plan was to make James Cautious or myself partner; redding up all old accounts and beginning on a new footing, but taking away from my uncle all right of meddling in the cash affairs of the concern. I was surprised and pleased to hear Eliza in this strain. Never did sympathy or counsel sink more sweetly into a human mind in distress; never was oil thrown on the troubled waves with more effect; yet the thought was not exhausted or lost in the feeling—give up all my fair prospects in Glasgow, and come home and be myself my uncle's partner! I could not as yet think of that; but then the thought of being near Eliza had a wonderful power over me, and cleared away objections. In return, Eliza confided to me the vexation and annoyance she suffered from Mrs W.'s tyranny ever since she had declined to be driven into her schemes; that she left her no personal liberty, but every day and every hour was scheming and dictating to her; and that had it not been for the kindness of the old

My father said to me
Sometimes he swears
That I'll be a lawyer
Like him
— that's what I want to be
— that's what I want to be

My father said to me
Sometimes he swears
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Like him
— that's what I want to be
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to walk with us next afternoon, as I was
 the morning after, on a visit to
 as I might not have it in my power to see her
 Glasgow. She could not promise this, for it
 her consent; yet she would endeavour to
 find some good excuse for going out; at any
 hour to meet us on the Calton Hill at six o'clock,

mind to speak to my uncle next day, and re-
 upon his increasing irregularity, but I found my-
 he was so correct, orderly, and respectable in his
 could not think of addressing him on the subject.
 as something ungrateful and overbearing in a young
 set myself up as a censor over my parent, as I might
 him. Helen was much disappointed and chagrined.
 think I wished to put it off altogether; and I again
 undertake the task; for which purpose she left us alone
 for dinner. Still I had the utmost difficulty to make
 at last I did get vent for my speech, somewhat as fol-

When intending to speak to you these two days past on a
 I am afraid, will not be very pleasant for either of us.'
 looked full at me with surprise, wondering what was to fol-
 nearly disconcerted, but the ice being broken I felt I must
 and I did so, but with an averted look. 'I have feared for
 past,' said I, 'that you were allowing yourself to get too
 accustomed to drinking,'—whereupon his eyes were immediately
 from me,—and I continued, 'It is not my own opinion alone,
 several of your friends have spoken to me about it both yesterday
 day, who seem very sorry for it; and as for Helen and James,
 like to break their very hearts about it.'
 could get no further, for my uncle, who had coloured up at first,
 blown his nose, shifted his position, and scratched his head, now
 interrupted me, by saying, 'Say no more, James; I'm no blind to my
 failings; I ken it's all true; but I am to have done with this way
 of doing, and the public will see me a new man after this.'

'May God grant it!' said I; and as no doubt both of us felt uneasy,
 left the room, and went out.

When I related to Helen what had passed, she was uncon-

happy. We were on the Calton Hill ten minutes before Eliza made her appearance, wrapped in her short ruby-coloured mantle, for it was a little cold. Our city, I thought, could not produce any more handsome, interesting, or beautiful young woman. To this opinion I firmly cling. Such is love! Of course the border on the mantle of green and yellow greatly relieved it: and the tasteful bonnet, with the well-chosen bit of flower—how it did become her! When near enough, I could see the same inimitable smile of beauty and kind-heartedness; and when she gave me her hand, it was done so confidently, as if she had given it away from her own keeping to mine. To be short, I offered her my arm, which was taken with the freedom and ease of a sister, and we walked most pleasantly for an hour and a half. My cup was full of happiness—full to the brim; and I firmly believed at the moment, from every appearance, that the feeling was reciprocal in the breast of my companion. Our discourse was very various, and rather of a general nature, with the exception of the language of our eyes, which frequently met. In thus walking along, I sometimes stopped and faced up, that I might have another opportunity of looking close into her countenance. This manœuvre I repeated too often; for Eliza, half angry-like, said, if I did not behave better, she would bid me good-night. Our time passed sweetly and swiftly away, and I promised to see her again at Mrs Winterman's ere I left. I was to make a formal call at a given hour, and take my chance of seeing Eliza.

It was a fine clear morning when I crossed the Firth. A fine steady breeze carried us across in forty-five minutes. With my great-coat over my arm, I walked on cheerily; for my mind being well-tuned, I was in harmony with all nature. How short the road looked! My mind was full of thoughts of great import,—Eliza and my uncle alternately. I arrived in time for dinner, to which the gudewife quickly added a plate of ham and egg, as she knew I liked it. We spent a very pleasant afternoon, and had three tumblers of punch. This was not thought much of in that age, but I am almost ashamed now to write it down. Mrs Meadows was glad to see me, and her usually sombre countenance sparkled with unaffected pleasure. Mr Meadows and Mary were not loath to quiz me as being a stickit farmer; but I was so happy, so well pleased with everything and everybody in the world, that it was impossible to make me angry. I was early up next morning, had a round before breakfast, and renewed

my acquaintance with several of my former fellow-labourers, all of whom grinned with happiness to see me ! Sandy said, 'A'm thinkin' ye've gotten a better billet noo, my lad ;' and Madge, who was a little apart, in answer to my query if Sandy and she agreed any better now, answered in her happiest mood,—blushing and pursing up her mouth, and shutting and opening her eyes quickly, as was her fashion,—'Sandy doesna meddle wi' onybody noo ; he's married, ye see.' I had a long talk with Mrs Meadows after breakfast in her usual very serious manner,—topics mostly religious ; and she was glad when I informed her that I was intimate in a house where family worship was attended to. She deplored the infatuation of my uncle, which was no secret to them ; for Mr Meadows told me that he had noticed it, and heard of it, and had remonstrated with him upon the subject half a year before this time, and that he had then promised him amendment, as he had done me. Mrs Meadows earnestly conjured me to pay attention to the strict observance of the Sabbath ; 'for,' added she (and I have never forgotten her words), 'if you ever feel yourself in that state of mind, when the Lord's day seems a burden to you,—if you prefer idleness, vain books, idle roaming about in the streets or in the fields, or in worldly employments, to the worship of God in public or in private, or studying your Bible, you may count upon it, James, as a sure sign that you are in a dangerous state. Lose no time, if these signs prevail, but go speedily to the white throne, and pray earnestly for saving grace to awaken in your soul new life and a more lively and active faith ; for if any of us were to be taken away suddenly in a state of such indifference, it is lamentable even to think of it.' There was a dignity and a fluency about Mrs Meadows I had never witnessed before ; and I suppose she thought she never had a more suitable man, and time and place for exhortation, and her earnestness was never forgotten.

Mr Meadows came in to get his 'eleven hours,' and I partook with him a slice of beef and bread, also a dram ; and I went on my way rejoicing, but not alone, for Mary accompanied me on the same nice gray pony she used to ride. She was going to see an ailing woman, of whom they had some time ago taken the charge ; 'but,' she added, in her own *naïveté*, 'if I go out of my way with a beau like you, wha will blame me ?' 'Not I, I am sure,' said I with animation. She was the same strange girl. The arch countenance, full of colour, beauty, and merriment ; the clever remarks and jokes ; the grotesque caricatures


of many of our mutual acquaintances, and especially if these were hypocrites : it was altogether impossible to resist the contagion of her beauty and mirthfulness, or abstain from joining in her cheerful laugh. I could not easily get away from her. In truth, I was fascinated, and pleased to be so. She was a rare, sensible, witty, and most engaging creature. I cast an admiring gaze after her as she cantered off in her usual way. My walk to the Ferry was one gorgeous reverie ;—my uncle's promise, Eliza's favour, the kindness of the Meadows, and my Glasgow prospects, all dressed up by youthful hope in glittering green and gold, bright and fresh, danced and played about my fancy !

A little time elapsed, and I became more sober : the bright tints began to fade away, until the picture was more like common life ; yea, even doubts and fears began again to mingle in the consideration. I was impatient, and waved them off, with ' Yes, yes ; that is all very true ; these things may happen, but they are not at all likely to happen to me.' Yet, again, the gorgeous shifting panorama began its round, phase after phase, view succeeding view, adorned by all the burnished gold and living green of youthful fancy ! Perhaps I ought to throw in here a sentence condemnatory of my own folly and silliness. I can do no such thing. These delights were sweet, oh, how sweet !—the effect of a clear conscience, good health, the approbation of friends, and a hopeful future. I have had my share of these,—I enjoyed them then,—I enjoy them now again in retrospect.

On getting home I called at Mrs Winterman's. They were all out, the lass said. I had no reason to expect otherwise than this, but I was silly enough to be offended ; and as I walked in the environs of the house while waiting, I fretted myself. They came at last. It was dusk, and they did not see me ; but I observed a gentleman with them whom I did not know. Who could he be ? I felt strange. Perhaps it was Mrs Winterman's favoured gentleman. I thought I would go in,—I thought I wouldn't, and yet I thought it would be taken ill if I did not call again before leaving for Glasgow. I knocked, and was shown in. Eliza and the gentleman were sitting on the sofa ; Mrs Winterman, the old gent, and Charles, at their books. I was introduced to Mr Homespun, who at the moment was presenting some flowers to his companion. So this was Mr Homespun, Mrs Winterman's favoured candidate for Eliza's heart ! She shook hands with me in her usual affectionate manner ; but I thought she seemed too much at her ease in the company she was in, and I did not like it. At the

same time, she treated me with much respect, and exhibited her usual tenderness of expression as far as she could, without being particular. I was not easy, however; for Mr Homespun was a good-looking man, stout, though very well-proportioned, with a broad, open, and rather florid countenance, and very well dressed. A large brilliant circlet emerald brooch sparkled in his breast, and the large bunch of gold and cairngorm seals, attached to his fine new gold watch by a massive chain of same material, dangled ominously. I felt the contrast, and was overpowered by a sense of the very poor figure I made beside the good, honest, rich man; so sat farther back into my corner, and remained silent. But Mrs Winterman did not allow me to enjoy my taciturnity; for, with her usual vanity and tact, she asked questions from time to time, which made him speak of his 'Saucy Sally,' and his 'Ardent,' both coppered, and both in the foreign trade, each about three hundred tons burden. His bank shares were next alluded to by Mrs Winterman; and last of all, his new house, with all its comforts and conveniences. How devotedly Mrs Winterman worshipped wealth, her eyes sparkling with an avaricious twinkle, and her demeanour towards Mr Homespun so flattering and servile! Mr Homespun viewed me with an easy indifference, spoke broadly and loudly, told his tale freely, and laughed heartily at his own jokes.

I had little to say; but, through pique, did speak occasionally, particularly if Mr Homespun advanced anything which I could with a good grace call in question, or amend, or a topic occurred on which I was particularly well-informed; and when I did, I flattered myself that my mode of expressing my opinion contrasted favourably with that of Mr Homespun; but this was not much to boast of, for he was broad and vulgar in his humour, and made light of opposing remarks. As Mrs Winterman paid slight attention to me, being devoted to her Croesus, I took an early leave. Miss Miller shook hands with me as frankly as I could have wished, and so we parted. But I was disappointed. The result of this visit was very different from what I had expected: not a minute of Eliza alone, no opportunity given for one kind expression; and then again the happy, jovial-looking Mr Homespun, with his ships, his bank shares, new house, etc. What was I to hope for against him?—a clerk lad merely, with a salary in prospect of not above fifty pounds a year, and my only friend—my uncle—going so fast to wreck! Well may it be thought I was sad enough, and I carried my sadness with me to Glasgow.



I was a day beyond my leave, and Mr Crafty was displeased. He told me, very justly, that when I was liberally used, I ought not to have exceeded my time,—that he had made a business arrangement, which, from my not being in my place, he had been obliged to postpone. I felt I had done wrong, and apologized. I was thoughtful and sad for several weeks after my return. It frequently occurred to me that Eliza thought favourably of me. But in what relation? or in what prospect? My belief at times was that she never had once contemplated the possibility of my becoming at any future period a suitor for her hand; that she only loved and regarded me as a brother, and hence the frankness of her conduct, her readiness to meet me, her candour and openness in advising with me on my uncle's affairs. This conviction formed itself completely within me, I admitted its probability, and at times its certainty. No doubt, Eliza had, with a freedom becoming a sister, imparted to me her differences with Mrs Winterman, and her dislike of Mr Homespun; yet as he was really a worthy sort of man, and a rich man, with Mrs Winterman devoted to his interest, I thought it very probable that Eliza would at last consent to become his partner for life, and that the world would applaud her prudence, and that I would be forgotten. To this painful conclusion did my reveries often lead.

Meantime, my uncle, who had been uncommonly steady for two months after my departure, had relapsed again into his former easy and dangerous habits. James Cautious wrote me he would stay no longer, as he could do no good, and thought it his duty to let me know, that I might take such steps as I thought proper to fill his place. Helen wrote by James's desire and her own, confirming these bad news. I wrote both in a mild conciliatory style, encouraging them to try to do the best they could. I wrote also to my uncle, and gave Helen a copy of my letter. This had a good effect for a time, but it soon shared the fate of the personal remonstrance.

When in Leith, I found that Mr Stately was assisted by a Mr Comely, a very fine-looking young man, of apparently twenty years of age. Mr Stately seemed to respect him, and, as far as I could see, treated him almost as an equal. What then, therefore, was my surprise when he called upon me at Mr Crafty's, as if he was on a pleasant jaunt? He asked me how I lodged; and when he knew I had a room and a bed to myself, he exclaimed that that would be capital, for he could take up his quarters with me for a few nights,

and thus save something. Without reluctance I consented, for Mr Comely was one of the most pleasant insinuating lads I have ever known; and his personal attractions were an additional charm—a handsome person, a fine colour, an eloquent black eye, with arched eyebrows; such a soft pleasant speaker too; and then he sang beautifully. So he came, and after he had been a day or two with me, he said he would like better to get a place in Glasgow than to return to Leith. I was astonished, but he put it off in an easy way—that he had had a slight difference with Mr Stately, had taken the opportunity of leaving him; ‘for really,’ he said, ‘I could not get so much as keep soul and body together, and I am a big fellow now, and must do something.’ This passed with me, for I was not of a suspicious nature; but I sometimes wondered why he had never given me the full particulars of his difference with Mr Stately, who, when I was in Leith, treated him more as a companion than a servant. I never met one who more suddenly took my affections captive—he had such a sweet, yet manly look. Then his coming to me at this time was somewhat *apropos*, for I was dejected and low. He expected his chest and clothes as soon as we could get a place for him, and his father would send him some money, as he had written him to do so. I knew his father was a poor man, and was not surprised that cash never came. Meantime, I lent him five shillings and five shillings, two shillings and sixpence and two shillings and sixpence, and lastly one shilling; and to enable me to do this I had borrowed one pound from Mr Bluff.

One day having asked money from me, I answered I had not a shilling left; so he sauntered away to kill time till the dinner-hour. He was very animated when I came home, and proceeded to recount his adventures for the day—‘Sauntering along, I saw the court door open: there was an interesting trial going on, so I stepped in. This is the very thing for me, thinks I: so I’m making for the gallery door; but I saw that everyone put something into the doorkeeper’s hand. Oh, thinks I, this won’t do for me, for I had not a penny; so I entered into conversation with the doorkeeper. I said I believed this was a trial which was exciting great interest; that I had never been present on such an occasion; stated that it was to be the last day of my stay in Glasgow; and without seeming to be aware that there was still room in the gallery, or that anything was expected for admission, I continued to regret that I had been so unfortunate as to come so late. The doorkeeper said little; but I had observed that he was a snuffer: so pulling out my box, and tapping

on it in an indifferent manner, I took a hearty pinch, and handed him my box, with—"Do you take snuff, friend?" and he accepted the proffered pinch. I chatted away a while, asking various questions about the judges, the court, and so on. At last, as if despairing of gaining admission, and stretching out my arms, and yawning, I said to him—"Well, friend, I must bid you good-morning, I believe;—but here, take another pinch first." "Stay," says the doorkeeper, as he appropriated the pinch of snuff to its destiny,—“stay; I'll see if there's any room yet; follow me;” and he elbowed about the crowd, and placed me in one of the best seats in the gallery. So much for fair words and two pinches of snuff.'

In the evenings, while with me, he would sing with much spirit and taste the fine old English songs of 'Ere around yon huge oak that o'er shadows the mill,' 'In the downhill of life when I find I'm declining;' and the beautiful 'I'm wearin' awa', Jean,' with such pathos as almost to draw tears; then he would conclude with—'There was a jolly miller once lived on the river Dee.' I could do a little at singing,—sometimes as second, sometimes as bass,—and our evenings passed harmoniously away.

He made some faint attempts to get a situation in Glasgow, but did not seem in earnest, therefore did not succeed. Time wore on. I had given him pocket-money to the extent of seventeen shillings. I felt I was falling into debt; and at last I gave him a hint that I was getting aground for want of funds. It cost me a mustering-up of all my courage ere I could tell him this; but Comely took it quite easy, as if he seemed to have expected it. He said he had come off at a broadside, and had not much more than paid his expenses to Glasgow. He excused his father for not having sent him money, by saying he forgot when he wrote to give him his address, but had done so now. While he was with me, the king's birthday came round, and we got a holiday. Comely, Walter (on a visit), Symmetry, and self, had all been down the water bathing and swimming, enjoying ourselves very much. Here, attracted by his beautiful swimming, we saw the round black head of one of my schoolfellows at Forward's. I knew him at once; he rose so lightly at every stroke,—in fact, he was the most elegant swimmer I had seen. He joined us on our homeward saunter. I did not care for him much. He was rather low in his tastes and associates, and a noted pugilist. It seemed somehow as if a matter of course, the whole five sauntered in the direction of my lodgings; and

this cost me another five shillings for bread and cheese, ale and porter. We, however, enjoyed ourselves very well till my schoolfellow was to sing in turn; and he struck up a vile song with such vivacity, that he was at the second verse when I called out, 'Come, come, that will never do; we must have something decent from you.'

The laconic answer was, 'If you will not take what a man has, ye maun just want.'

'Let it be so, then,' said I, 'and we will say good-night.'

I was indeed angry at Comely, for I saw winks passing between the swimmer and him. In all I was sixty-five shillings out of pocket by his visit; but I never can regret what he cost me, he had so much that was amiable and pleasant about him. When he left he promised to remit me, but did not. I wrote him, but got no answer. I then wrote to his father, and, in place of cash, got a smart reprimand, applicable both to Comely and myself, the force of which lay in the question, Was an old industrious careful man, earning his daily bread, to be called upon to provide money to young spendthrifts? He even expressed his wonder at my assurance in making the application! A pleasant finish to a little romance of youth! I may now give the explanation of all as I got it afterwards from Mr Stately and others. Mr Stately had fixed for a journey on business, to occupy a few days, when he was taken ill of sore-throat. At this time he had great confidence in Comely, and thought he would send him, as he had for some time before intended to introduce him to his journey work. Comely jumped at the proposal; but in place of finishing and home on Friday evening, he did not come till Monday. He sent a letter to reach on Friday, with remittances of considerable amount, stating that he had found it impossible, being a stranger to most of the customers, to get through as he, Mr Stately, from his expert habits of business, could; and that he felt he could not finish till Monday, to do anything like justice to all he had to call upon. This went down pretty well with Mr Stately, and the more readily as Comely had paid him an implied compliment; but he did not give entire credence to the young man's statement; he put him through a rigid cross-examination when he came home; and after making him a full allowance for his travelling expenses, there was a deficiency of two pounds ten shillings, which he could in no way account for. As it was his first journey, Mr Stately was not hard upon him about the two pounds ten shillings; and yet to exceed in money and also in time was a coincidence which left a root

in the mind. All, however, seemed to be forgotten both by master and man, and they appeared to be on as good terms as ever. When Mr Stately made his next journey in the same district of country, he was asked many questions about Mr Comely :—If he was not going to send him back ?—What a pleasant lad he was !—Who were the ladies he had with him ?—I have heard they were at Perth and other places ! All this amazed Mr Stately ; but when he had just finished this journey's business, and was about to leave Dunfermline, an innkeeper accosted him on the street, telling him that *his partner* had left a little sum of thirty-five shillings unsettled at his house, in consequence of his having paid all his money too cleverly up into the bank, in the expectation of another payment, but which he did not get.

'My *partner* left thirty-five shillings to pay !'

'Yes, sir ; he and the ladies spent three nights in my house. I knew your horse and conveyance the moment I saw it again. Splendid horse that of yours, sir !'

Mr Stately came home, having paid the Dunfermline bill of thirty-five shillings ; said nothing for a week ; and having in the interim examined his books and accounts, he found, that with some little exceptions, all was right as far as he could judge. He then put two weeks' wages into his hand, and told him he must look out for himself ; for after his foolish and criminal conduct on the journey, he could not think himself safe with him for a single day. Poor fellow, he said not one word. I have often thought what a bitter day the succeeding Sabbath must have been to him. All his hopes of rising in life blasted ; for who would have anything to do with one who could give no reference ?

The extenuation was, that Comely, intoxicated with vanity, had thought that he might combine business with pleasure, and so he took his sister and his sweetheart with him. They had several acquaintances in various families, and Comely drove them here and there as they wished, and so consumed the time. And the excursion to Perth crowned all ; for the horse had that day run fifty miles—a circumstance which excited Mr Stately's ire more than all. Comely afterwards went to London, from whence he wrote me twice,—nice well-written letters, three pages of foolscap each, but no repayment. He got first one place and then another in London. He invited me to come up, and he was sure I would get a salary of one hundred pounds a year. About a year and a half afterwards he enlisted, and was sent out to

one of the West India Islands, I forget which, where a lady of the country, seeing such a handsome, well-educated gentlemanly-looking fellow in the ranks, purchased his discharge, on the ground that he would be useful as a teacher in the colony, and afterwards married him. I was thinking of opening a correspondence with him, and, for that purpose, made inquiry at his relations; but they were very backward on the subject, and either could not or would not let me have the information necessary. A floating report that he had been carried off by the fever of the country closed the whole.

CHAPTER XII.

MORE SHOP LIFE.

A SEASON of happy calmness it was now for some time my good fortune to enjoy. I was happy with all my friends, and liked them the better the longer I knew them. Not a week passed in which I did not either dine or sup with Mr Bluff at his lodging; and sometimes he asked Symmetry to join us. Homely fare in eatables was sweetened by a relish of hunger; and we did not exceed the bounds of temperance in our liquids. Once a month or so (if I had a mind) I dined at Mr Crafty's. I did not relish this, for the invitation was always on Sunday; besides, I seldom spoke a word there; and for me to take an allowance of wine and toddy as large as the others did, was far too oppressive to me. No doubt I confess that I took it, and liked it; yet I was never pleased with myself on Monday morning.

I was now so expert at the books that I had one-third part of my time to spend in the various warehouses, assisting either in the wholesale or retail departments, by which I gained much valuable knowledge, and I met pleasant looks from all. Ever, indeed, since young Peter Crafty went to Liverpool, all was a clear atmosphere. Bluff going about bouncing and scolding as was his habit, drilling up the servants, pushing forward everything, promoting cleanliness, good order, and arrangement in every department of the business—of which he was the soul—and yet liked by all, for the simple reason that he had no pride. I was now worth a guinea a week, and I am ashamed to say I spent it

all, though provisions were more moderate then than when I was on twelve shillings. I ought to have put past one pound a month. This arose from an easy slackness of disposition, and was a total neglect of the principles of economy. It was negative vice—the more to be avoided that I knew how matters were declining with my uncle. But there were no savings banks at that period.

A slight interruption to my comfort took place. Mr Crafty was up early one morning. He left the premises for a little, not saying anything. His chum Mr Skinny called, asking for him. I said he was absent, but had no doubt he would be back in the course of a minute or two. In came Mr Crafty.

‘Has Mr Skinny been here?’

‘Yes.’

‘Why did you not keep him?’

‘He said he would be back directly.’

‘But you knew where I was?’

‘No, sir.’

‘Yes, you know that at this hour, if I am not in the counting-room, I am always in the factory.’

‘It did not occur to me, sir, I am so little in the front premises.’

‘Don’t tell me;’ and he burst into a passion, walking the floor with short steps, giving me volley after volley, and names hard to be borne, as one of a pack of ‘useless,’ ‘thickheads,’ ‘rascals,’ ‘not worth house-room,’ and so on, all which was only stopped by Mr Skinny reappearing, with whom he went off on a pleasure jaunt for a few days.

I could have easily borne this insult if it had been in private; but before porters, shopmen, and customers, it was a different thing. My manhood rose within me, and urged me not to let it pass; and although Mr Bluff counselled me to let it alone, yet I gave him the uncivil answer: ‘Yes, submit as you do, and be used as you are amongst them, without respect or consideration, although you are spending your life and strength for him.’ His answer was, ‘Godsake, man, please yourself; I would be glad to see you twa at it.’

This fixed my resolution, and I actually screwed up my courage to attack my master on his return: ‘Mr Crafty, that Wednesday morning you left with Mr Skinny, you said I was a rascal, and not worth house-room.’ He looked up at me from his side of the desk with an expression as if amused; and I continued: ‘I do not think you should

have called me a rascal ; and if I am not worth house-room, I have no wish to remain.'

'Tut, tut,' said Mr Crafty, 'you know I was in a passion ; you were somewhat to blame, and you are not to catch up your master's words spoken hastily, which meant no harm to you, as you must know. Mind you your books, and let us have no more about it.'

This was a lame apology, yet I felt quite satisfied with it, and said no more. Mr Bluff remarked : 'You have got more out of him than ever I got.' I answered, 'Because you do not stand up ; you bear everything.' And so the hurricane was over. Mr Crafty never insulted me again ; in fact, I thought my slight remonstrance had produced a good effect. Forbearance is a Christian virtue of great value ; but to lie quietly under insult, and be servilely passive, is a virtue pushed into a vice.

Notwithstanding the sad anticipations which occasionally intruded themselves upon me when my thoughts turned towards my uncle and home, or rested in absorbing reveries upon the nature and particulars of my latest interviews with Miss Miller, still I was far from unhappy ; for, from the length of time which had elapsed since I left her, a secret hope, almost imperceptible to myself, had sprung up, that some disagreement had taken place between Mr Homespun and her. I was therefore comparatively at ease on this head ; and I may say this was one of the happy periods of my life.

It was my custom on Sabbath mornings, when the weather permitted, to walk out two miles before breakfast. I hailed the arrival of spring with great pleasure ; the green sward thickly strewn over with gowans was ever to me a sweet and cheering sight. How agreeable to look upon the orchards and gardens at that period of the year, every tree loaded with blossoms of pure white, or tinged with a touch of the colour of the rose,—the sweet green of the hedgerows, so fresh and maiden-like when it first appears, and the morning breeze wafting odours at once delicious to the sense, rich, fresh, and balmy ! A delight of another nature, yet equally gratifying in its season, was afforded me in harvest-time, with its clear unclouded sky, the heaven of a deep blue, yielding to the eye a distinct view of the distant hills, and the whole face of the country variegated with fields of a golden hue, while the keen and invigorating air of the morning caused the lazy straggler to mend his pace.

All these, to one pent up during the week, rendered the Sabbath-

day doubly agreeable ; but to these many other pleasing notices remain to be added. The comfortable, refreshed, and self-complacent feeling produced in us by the total change of raiment, from the shirt to the hat, a smooth chin, our best and brawest apparel, and a feeling of youthful vigour, all inducing us to tread the ground with free and elastic step ; a conscience, too, unburdened and clear, enabling us to look freely and easily around us without fear or forwardness in the strength and security of innocence. The din and turmoil of the city have given place to the grateful stillness of Sabbath morn ; no rumbling waggons, no rattling coaches, no cries, no coach horns, none of the stunning noise of boiler-making,—a delightful freedom from clouds of smoke shot up from tall chimneys into the darkened air ; in short, not a sight or a sound to break in upon the tranquillity of the day of rest, except the glad bark of the dog frisking around his master also in apparent enjoyment of the day ; the happy faces of the washed artisans dressed in their best at their sauntering morning walk ; groups of lasses, half-dozens in a row, in clean half-dresses, with extra white muslin caps on well-arranged hair, moving along with smiling looks, and halting from time to time to exchange salutations and the light laugh with acquaintances, whether male or female. All these appearances prove that at least the humbler classes in the manufacturing towns regard the return of the day of rest with happy gratitude. There is no stain or blot upon this fair picture, except where the abandoned drunkard appears like a foul spectre, filthy and staggering, quite insensible to the general horror he creates as the spectators quickly shun him and get out of his way..

But to return and give an account of the disposal of my own time on Sundays. First was my walk ; then breakfast ; after which a book till within half an hour of the church bells, at which time I visited my friend John Frank, conversed with him and his wife, and accompanied them to church. I had a seat there in a pew rented by my friend Symmetry. We had sincere and earnest clergymen, but the singing was almost deplorable. I took tea with John perhaps twenty Sabbath afternoons in the course of the year, and as a *per contra* would be at his house two evenings in the week assisting him with his books and accounts. At times when I reflect upon the honesty, benevolence, active industry, and cheerfulness of this individual, I am inclined to say I never knew one who filled his place in society better. If a neighbour had met a misfortune, John at once said, Get another like myself, and

I will wash myself, and put on my coat, and give you two hours to make a collection. If there was a row in his little street, John Frank would be seen, baton in hand, bursting through the crowd: 'What's this, sirs, eh? There must be no disturbance here;' and being always well backed, he generally succeeded in restoring peace to the district. He did not covet a large business, but he made the very best of goods. 'Na, na, I must have my price,' and John always got the top. I do not think this man had an enemy.

After having been at the forenoon church, I sometimes went home to dinner, sometimes to Mr Bluff's, sometimes to Mr Dainty's. It was a treat to dine at Mr Dainty's table, and accompany the party to afternoon and sometimes evening service. The family (of whose singing powers I have already said something) consisted of six in number, five of whom were trained singers. To natural musical talent they joined taste, feeling, and skill; and I am quite sure their singing gave a point and character to the worship of the congregation. One afternoon especially, I remember, when there were but few present, the voices of the family predominated in different parts, while I joined the master in the bass; the harmony rising to the concave roof, mingling and swelling with such a delightful heaven-like effect that I can never forget it; and, to crown the effect, the clergyman had drawn attention to the beauty of the hymn when he read it out.

I had again changed my lodgings, for I was every way uncomfortable with the old maid; and I next had a room from a working tailor, a married man with three children. I found him a very sensible man. I had most of my old smoke-dried religious books with me, and produced from my chest one or two now and then for study. Seeing them lying about, Mr Steadyman took a look at them and exclaimed, 'Eh, Mr Meetwell, these are the good old standard writers. Dear me, sir, where did you get these?' and when I gave him his will of my whole collection, he was very thankful. He was a debating, prying fellow, rather deep for me sometimes, yet I had many a profitable wrestle with him. He was a voluntary as well as Mr Dainty, and I frequently accompanied him to his church. Here the singing was also excellent. We compared notes and criticised very closely after every sermon. I think my conversations with Mr Steadyman rendered me more liberal and enlarged in my views, both in religious and civil politics, than I had previously been.

Having dined one Sunday at Mr Bluff's, on my way to church I met

Symmetry, apparently looking for me. 'We have ten minutes yet,' said he, 'and I am very thirsty.' Hardly asking, but evidently expecting me to follow him, he dived down a stair in the main street. 'A bottle of beer and a bottle of ale' was called for and on the table ere I was hardly seated; they were mixed and poured out to us. He declared himself wonderfully refreshed by the first heavy pull at the tankard; then he became chatty; and the stair door having been put to for appearance sake, as the bells were ringing, he pulled out his watch, declaring we were too late, and that we would just finish our ale and have one dram, and then have a walk. Of course going to church after any quantity of liquor, however small, was with me totally out of the question. I never did and never would have done such a thing. I was very vexed at this incident, and resolved he should never play me such another trick. Symmetry was by this time growing addicted to liquor. As he turned out on the Sabbath-days, you would not have met one surpassing him in personal appearance. Here he is, though I have given a spice of him before:—Black coat and open black vest; a full breast of very white frill; a neat, narrow black necktie; light drab cassimers, with long leggings of the same cloth; a foot of ribbon same colour fluttering at each knee. His neat head, well-trimmed hair, faultless hat, his short, measured tread, looking so meek,—the meekness of pride, as his glancing jealous look indicated,—he was, take him for all in all, truly named Symmetry; a real manly beauty, combining agility with grace, and strength with proportion. He tried this game with me a second time, but I would not go near the trap, choosing my own way, and he was half angry that we did not meet till we were at the church door. Poor Symmetry was exposed to great temptation; he was most excellent company over a convivial glass, and Mr Crafty's system was to allow him, almost without stint, every expense he incurred with the customers, or even influential upper servants. Mr Bluff had also the same privilege, much to his loss; and none of the two had the least idea of their danger till it was too late. Even Mr Crafty himself had not any adequate notion of the ultimate consequences of such license. Of my private devotions at this period of my life, all I shall say is, would to God that I could feel the same warmth, earnestness, and satisfaction now that I did then.

Sometimes I had a long ramble with John Frank after tea, equal to six or seven miles, accompanied by his only son, a lively boy of ten years of age. Our conversation was not altogether unprofitable, for

John had such a fund of humility, gratitude, and thankfulness always about him, that although his remarks were homely and illiterate, yet there was a heartiness about them quite contagious, and no one could be long in his company without feeling interested by them.

Since Walter had left us, I had hardly had any companion of my own age to associate with on Sundays. Mr Bluff was almost every Sunday at Mr Crafty's. I associated for some time with Symmetry; but he had no mind, no education or love of books, and then the tendency to the public-house, as a matter of necessity, put quite an end to it.

But in Mr Steadyman I found a counterpart of myself—fond of religious studies, a conscientious dissenter from the Established Church, tolerably well acquainted with history, especially that of Buonaparte, and a shrewd, almost radical politician. In these dreadful stirring times, when every man's heart beat hard on the arrival of the mail, either with exultation or terror, we—Steadyman and self—read the despatches from end to end, and commented on all with the deepest interest. But I must be much more particular about Mr Steadyman, for he helped to form my character in no slight degree. He had, as a young man, been a bit of a swell, had rather a touch of pomposity, a little oracular-like in speaking, a good-looking fellow on the whole, and dressed well. He had been married six years at the time I became acquainted with him. His wife fell in love with him, or he with her; at any rate it was a love match, and her parents had been opposed to it. By the time I knew them the romance of the affair had all been dusted out of them; and Mr Steadyman, master tailor, with one journeyman and one apprentice, found it tight enough work to live. A girl of four years, a little boy of two, and the eldest of five years, were totting about the floor. In order to have a creditable house for business and genteel customers calling, they had taken a house at twenty pounds of yearly rent. The best back room being the tailor's shop, a dull back room was mine, at four shillings a week; and they sometimes let their front room and bed-closet for ten shillings a week. When all was let, the poor woman had much, far too much, to do, for she had no servant: cooking and cleaning, and her three children always in the way—a hard fate; for she had been accustomed to ease and leisure, adulation and showy dressing.

The repeated refusal of her parents to assist her had cut deep, and depressed her spirits; and it had rather soured her husband too, for he was often out of work. The truth is, he did not fit very well. Her

house was a kind of clean, but ill redd-up. I think I see the poor woman now,—at full speed in the middle of her work, slip-shod, her mutch flying open, her face not washed, with besom, duster, and dish-clout. She was a pleasant, open-faced, good-looking woman ; warm-hearted, but shallow ; not very capable of making just reflections ; and when tired out with her work, and finding that her lodgers would exact cooked supper or such like, she would sit down and cry like a child ; then up, wash her hands and face, and at it again. Sabbath was with her a day of rest, but not a day of happiness ; for she had got no new dresses for some years, and those she had were old-fashioned ; so, even when dressed in her best, she was but shabby-genteel. She was conscious, too, of this ; and many a wrangle had she with her loving, all-enduring husband.

‘ But, my dear Annie, God bless me, what more can I do than I am doing ? ’

Often have I heard these wranglings with deep sorrow. She had cause to rejoice that her husband was quite a sober man ; and yet it was painful to hear her contrasting her situation before her marriage, —when she was fondled and dressed, and did no more work than she pleased, and saw so much pleasant company,—and

‘ What am I now ? A slave and a drudge from six o’clock in the morning till eleven o’clock at night ; and, after all, neither get meat nor clothes like any other body.’

There was too much truth in all this ; but how to help it ?

During the time I stayed with them, I found the husband an excellent and instructive companion. I often spent my spare half-hour at meal-times on a stool beside him ; and it was seldom that I did not carry away some new idea. He had studied religious, political, and even legal books, with considerable assiduity and success. On his idle Mondays he often frequented the small-debt or other courts ; and I got excellent accounts of the proceedings, with sharp and just criticism. Between the one year and the other, if his employment had been equal he might have done very well. There were three months of spring work and three months of winter work, but much idle and unemployed time during the intervals ; besides, when mournings were wanted, assistance was indispensable. But woe to him if any respectable person called when he was absent ! Our lady, like all weak-minded females, had taken to scolding : she complained that her gude-man took up his head with courts and nonsense ; and that if he were

pushing, what would hinder him to make way for his family as well as others! The fact is, as I have hinted, Steadyman had no natural talent for tailor-craft. He would have made a good schoolmaster, or writer, or even a minister, if he had got proper education: but now the mournful echo of 'too late,'—'too late,' added a heaviness to his meditations. He had his cheerful hours though; for his workroom often resounded with excellent singing,—all the three, master, man, and apprentice, were gifted in that way. They did not take a great range, but confined themselves to about a dozen of pieces; and at times a burst of harmony would exhilarate me when at my dinner, such as 'Ye banks and braes;' 'Home! sweet home!' 'Oh, are ye sleeping, Maggie?' 'Deserted by the waning moon;' 'For England then with favouring gale;' 'All in the Downs.' These, and such like, in tenor, bass, and second, were most pleasant; and I sometimes joined them. These musical affairs were continually inveighed against by the mistress. She was sure the needles did not go fast when the music was so slow; and that they aye waited till the end of the song before they came for the goose!

Sometimes she would harp so cruelly on her husband's feelings, that he would be driven to quiz her. This cut her to the heart, and made her cry; and then he would apologize. At times, when her patience was worn out with hard work, and the children in her way, squalling and out of temper for want of attention, all the three would be hurled out of the kitchen into the workroom, and the door shut. In three minutes all the three would be summarily ejected from the workroom and into the lobby, when a glee for three voices of another kind would be performed in the dark; but this occurred only when the men were really very much pushed with their work. After all, there were many intervals of peace and enjoyment in this house; for the master was fond of his wife, fond of his children, and fond of peace at his own fireside—a sensible, kind-hearted man; and she, except when irritated by hard work, a pleasant, tolerably well-educated, rather lady-like person. I think I was a peacemaker here, and a favourite with both. I gave as little trouble as possible, and paid some attention to the children, with whom the mother had no method; no headpiece for rules and discipline. One evening, when the eldest boy was literally tearing up the house with noise, and no cause for it, I said impatiently, 'I would not suffer that.'


'What wad ye do?'

'I would punish him, and make him glad to be still.'

No sooner said than done, and done with a will too. The little fellow was overwhelmed with astonishment, as his looks testified; and while he was wondering what this could mean, he fell asleep. Sometimes, when there was peace in the house after I came home at night, and when I felt a little of a craving myself, I would send for two bottles of ale or porter, or half-and-half, and we would have a nice, social, happy crack all round, till eleven o'clock.

Mr Crafty now called me to re-engage with him for another year or two. I was now completely up to my business; and was consulted by all on many points. I was a good collector of accounts; everything was correct, well kept, and up to the mark. I told him I would most willingly engage, but that I could not do so till I had the sanction of my uncle, which I would write for, and expected to obtain. It was fortunate that I did make this reserve; for only next day I received two letters, one from Helen, and another from James Cautious, by which I was informed that there was no amendment of conduct at home; and James wrote, that as he felt himself without power to arrest the downward tendency of affairs, he would stay no longer, to be blamed in the end for mismanagement. Indeed, he plainly told me, he thought it was my duty, as the only one who had influence, and something like authority, to come home and remodel the whole, taking to myself the chief management. Helen's letter corroborated James's.

This was heavy news to me. The prospect of home under such circumstances was very cheerless: how much more was it rendered so when I had deliberately read all Helen's letter to an end! She said she now wrote to me as to a brother; earnestly begged me to lay aside all thoughts of remaining in Glasgow, and to come home as soon as my engagement with Mr Crafty would permit. She said, 'I am sure you know that it is your duty to do something for us if possible, and so I hope you will; perhaps God may bless your endeavours more than you can think.' It was impossible for me to withstand such an appeal as this. But here my heart sank within me when I read further on: 'Eliza desires her kind remembrances to you. It is fixed she is to leave about a month hence. Mrs Winterman and she can no longer agree. I believe the reason is, that she insists she shall marry Mr Homespun forthwith—the time she gave for consideration being now at an end. Eliza is very unwilling to go home, as she knows Mrs Winterman has poisoned her mother's mind against her already; for she has received




several severe letters from the south. I am really sorry for Eliza ; her mind is troubled and tossed in such a manner. She is exceedingly useful to Mrs Winterman, who has become so accustomed to her, that I do not see how she could well do without her ; yet Eliza will not consent to this match, and Mrs Winterman is as obstinate on the other side. Eliza's mother has almost threatened to shut her door against her in consequence. She is very much to be felt for, I am sure of that.'

These tidings filled my mind. I certainly was most reluctant to leave Glasgow, my many kind friends there, and my progressive state of advancement ; and to go home to coerce my excellent uncle, was painful to think of. While trying to reconcile my mind to this alternative on former occasions, I had always had a cheering hope that I would occasionally see Eliza, as a sunbeam to enlighten and gild the gloomy picture ; but should she really return to her home at some seventy or eighty miles' distance, what prospect was there that ever I should see her again ? This thought was the more bitter now, since I knew she had rejected Mr Homespun. He who had caused me so much apprehension—the rich, the confident Mr Homespun refused ! What then ? Was this of any consequence to me ? I could not help thinking it was. I thought the time was not far distant when I might dare to avow what I felt. Could nothing be done to avert this dreaded banishment ? I formed twenty schemes, and abandoned them all as soon as formed. At last I resolved, and carried my resolution into effect. I ordered a fire in my bedroom, bolted myself in, and having carefully ruled a large sheet of gilt-edged post, I wrote as follows :—

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will not, I trust, be offended at me addressing you as such, since on various occasions I remember with great pleasure your kind concern in affairs in which I had a deep interest. I hope you will not be offended at my writing you, for I feel so impelled to do it that I cannot resist it ; but I earnestly beg you to hear my reasons, and to accept of them as my excuse. Two days ago I received a letter from Helen, in which she informs me it was fixed that you are to return home without a hope almost of your ever returning to Edinburgh again.

'I will not say how severely I have felt these tidings of evil—for such I consider them to me, and one of the most serious disappointments I could have suffered ; and I beg you to believe me when I say,



that the prospect of enjoying your society as in days that are past, was a source of sweet anticipation to me, and tended much to reconcile me to the resolution I have taken of returning home, to endeavour, if possible, to restore my uncle's affairs to a more prosperous and regular condition. This is a task perhaps beyond my strength ; but painful as it will be to me, it is my duty to try, and as Helen says, " perhaps God may bless your endeavours more than you expect." But oh, Miss Miller, you will scarcely think how much I am damped and disheartened by the knowledge of your intended departure ! Probably means may yet be found to reconcile you to Mrs Winterman. But why should I be so selfish as even to wish you to remain in Edinburgh, when perhaps your situation is very uncomfortable ? for I well believe Mrs Winterman can be bitter enough when once she takes a determined side. Besides, a removal may be for your advantage ; you have so much the gift of making friends wherever you go, that perhaps the hand of Providence is in it for your good. How can Mrs Winterman part with you ?—you who have been so very useful to her, and to whom she professes so much love. I am sure I have often heard her declare how happy your company and conversation made her. If you really go, as is intended, I am sure that one day she will bitterly repent it. But I am rambling and bewildered, and scarcely know what I am saying. There is one request—I dare hardly make it, and yet I must—and I am sure you will forgive me, for I make it with the most respectful feelings. Will you, Miss Miller, as a remembrance of you, part with one ringlet of your hair to me ? My dear friend, do not be angry at this request ; if you think it improper, do not grant it.

‘But whether you grant me this favour or not, the remembrance of you, and the many sweet hours I have spent in your society, will ever live in my memory. Should you grant me this favour, I shall carefully preserve it for your sake ; and it will warm my heart every time I look upon it, and recall to my mind our first walk in the King's Park, when you for the first time accepted of my arm. It will also revive within me the remembrance of the beautiful moonlight night on the Calton Hill, with Helen and you, ere I went to my farming scheme. Above all, the last time when we three walked in the same spot, when I esteemed myself so happy—so very happy in your countenance and company. I have run on, till the sound of my own voice—for I imagine myself speaking to you—has emboldened me still further to add,—perhaps you will write me a few lines. But although I would

esteem this beyond what I can express, yet I will leave it to yourself, and your own correct sense of propriety, to grant both or neither of my requests.

‘Helen will forward any favour which you may choose to confer on me. Should we never meet again, I assure you, my dear friend, the warmest wishes of my heart will ever be, that wherever you are, health, innocence, and happiness may always accompany you, and may God be your guardian.—My dear Miss Miller, your sincere friend,

‘JAMES MEETWELL.’

In writing to Miss Miller I was at a loss how to express myself in warm enough terms, and yet to avoid actually making love to her, or pledging myself. This, on my part, would not only have been improper, but ridiculous, considering my position in life. Had I consulted inclination I would have devoted myself to her for life; but the knowledge that she was a lady, who must be kept as such, taught me to be somewhat prudent, and my letter was despatched under care to Helen. To Jamie Cautious I also wrote that I certainly would not engage myself again to Mr Crafty; but that he must not be impatient, if he requested a month or two more, for which I was sure to be well paid at this time. It is almost unnecessary for me to say how anxious I was as the time approached for receiving back my monthly box from Leith. I was prepared to content myself with a verbal message from Eliza, thanking me for my good wishes. But in the main I was very anxious indeed, and hopeful too, of a favourable answer.

On the return of the accustomed day, there was my box as usual awaiting me at dinner-time; and while my landlady was putting down dinner for me I opened it. Here was a newspaper tied up like a parcel, and within it two letters—one from Helen, the other in the quaint neat writing of Eliza. I sat down with them unopened before me. I pressed my hand to my forehead: a letter from Eliza—no doubt of it. I drew a long breath of relief; and when my landlady had left me alone I opened Helen’s letter first, for I was somewhat afraid to open the other. There was nothing in it to alarm me. It referred to Miss Miller’s letter for further particulars regarding herself and her intended departure. At last I took it up and cut neatly round the wafer with a pair of scissors. A lock of hair, black and shining, tied at the end with a white silk thread, met my view; a kind letter, three pages full, accompanying it. Now, now, what more could I desire? I required

no more—my happiness was complete! I would here most willingly copy this highly valued and sensible letter, but dare not. My word of honour was passed never to suffer any one to see this, or any other letter of hers, which subsequently passed between us; and it was on this express condition that she agreed to write me. I may say, however, that it expressed undisguised reluctance to leave Edinburgh; yet reflected but little on Mrs Winterman. It held out no hope or promise of returning—made no allusion to it. It was the language of a lofty mind, which felt conscious of having been unworthily treated, but scorned to complain. To me, and of my own letter and request, she spoke with the freedom and kindness of a right thinking mind,—taking a just view of all the circumstances with which we were connected,—with the ease and freedom of a sister. Sympathized with Helen and me as to the disheartening position of affairs at home; yet encouraged and advised me as far as she thought she could do so with propriety. And having said as much to me as to make the water stand in my eyes, she bade me adieu. How closely had she kept to the strict line of propriety, and yet had given full scope, as one would have thought, to the impulses of her feeling and affectionate heart! It was nice steering, but it was well accomplished; and her letter was to me a source of sincere happiness. I had thought my letter good, but I was fairly outdone; and, to tell the truth, was secretly a little mortified at the great superiority of talent in letter-writing thus exhibited over me by my fair correspondent.

While I was reading it over for the third time, my landlady opened my room door; but seeing how I was engaged, she begged pardon, as she thought I had gone out. I saw that she eyed my letter; and the lock of hair was conspicuously visible. I felt my face colour all over at being so absent; and I had forgotten, too, that my dinner was before me. My steak was quite cold, but that mattered little in those days; and under such circumstances anything will do for dinner. Subsequently, other ideas came into my head,—perhaps by this time Eliza was far distant from Edinburgh,—probably I had seen her for the last time.

CHAPTER XIII.

DANGERS WHICH BESET YOUTH.

AT a former period I mentioned that I had learned to play a little on the flute, and I could perform to my own satisfaction or that of any one not critical. I now felt a new want. I had never learned dancing. I knew Miss Miller danced very well, and was frequently at parties where it was practised. Three times of late had I been affronted for want of it. Once at a relation of my landlord Steadyman's, where a number of lightsome young folks made merry to a very indifferent violin. Another time, at Mr Crafty's annual supper, where the ladies of the house and some relations, invited for the purpose, formed partners for us clerks and shopkeepers. I was the only one who could not stand up to anything beyond a reel—a thing I could manage, for I had a good ear—but I had not learned a single step. Again, when Mr Dainty's family were at school, I was asked to be there to see them at their ball. I went, and was importuned beyond measure to stand up, but I durst not; and I have no doubt I was set down as an awkward obstinate fellow. Well, in the next close, and quite opposite our counting-room windows, a dancing-master got into a large room opposite and commenced teaching. His fiddle, and the beating and shuffling of feet on the floor, excited me; and I arranged with Mr Bluff for an hour's private teaching from four to five P.M.—when Mr Crafty was at dinner—price twenty-one shillings for sixteen lessons, extending over a month. I made fair progress in acquiring the steps, for my ear was accurate; but when I attended the Saturday practising, where there were a number of grown-up people like myself, all desirous of mutual improvement, and the country-dance was put in motion, I invariably got confused. I attended two balls, being determined to rub off my bashfulness. In one case where a lady—an excellent dancer—had accepted a ticket from me, she had had a conversation with some of her friends; and they having, I presume, told her that I was the most awkward fellow in the room, and that she would be affronted, she begged to return my ticket, and was off quick. On another occasion I had got a modest-like young lady for my partner. We were half down the dance, and to my consternation a new, and, as I thought, complicated affair was introduced. I looked

on in dismay. At last, with the energy of despair, I addressed my partner: 'Do you know that dance well?' 'No,' was the answer. 'Well, I do not know it at all. Would you have any objections to retire?' She good-naturedly consented; and I, with burning cheeks, was once more affronted. Had I got a little dancing at an early age, it would have saved me this awkward exposure. Surely it can be given at the age of ten or twelve years at less expense; and it is then much more easily and effectually learned. Besides, at that early age, no harm to morals can arise. At an advanced time of life it is dangerous; and I confess that at some of these occasions light-hearted females were present—come purposely to meet with the beaux. And when folks of twenty years of age, promiscuously assembled, are heated in the giddy whirl, it is apt to engender loose thoughts, and lead to improper conduct in both parties. At least so I judged, who am of no touchwood disposition. Yet, so far was I from feeling any degree of self-confidence, I know that, but for the degree of reserve which belongs to me from constitution, education, and habit, I have more than once felt my self-possession deserting me.

One may very easily get entangled in these promiscuous assemblages in a way that may affect the character of his future life; examples of this kind are easily found in the experience of every one. Mr Bluff cautioned me on this subject, and gave me as instances the case of two shopmen or clerks who, just before Walter and I came to Crafty's, had fallen victims to similar temptations. His own account of them was this:—

'Jamie Russell was as expert a shopman as ever we had, and as neat a dancer as ever footed a floor. What then? Dancing gaed atween him and his wits; he was at it four nights in the week, and could seldom get to the counter till ten o'clock in the day. He was excellent company, and was led on more and more into drinking and expense, till he became a bag of debt. Where he went to, God knows; I never heard of him again, but I know he borrowed two pounds of me.' When he told me this story I thought of Comely. His next was: 'Willie Hewitt was as fine a laddie as ever lived; and although he was as fresh as a rose when he came to Glasgow, and a strapping fellow to boot, he could not take care of himself either. His father's name introduced him into more than twenty families, and he had the knack of making so many acquaintances, that old Crafty was quite annoyed at the number of them who called at the shop. He was

either at some dancing-party or in the theatre every night. I need not tell you more ; he fell into decline and died just of night-work too. Character to young men like us is everything ; for instance, should a chap get within the attraction of female society, such as I have alluded to, it is indisputable that there is a fascination in it which renders self-extrication almost impossible. If it become a habit, presents and jaunts,—the theatre, the concert,—make incessant demands upon him. He gets short of money ; cannot pay his landlady ; cannot pay his tailor ; borrows, but cannot pay again ; and gets surrounded by petty creditors who vex his heart out ; and he is driven to evasions and lies. The current now drifts him fast towards the lee shore. He drinks and borrows from his boon companions ; but all fails him. One day he gets payment of say thirty pounds. He goes home to dinner with it in his pocket ; he is very uneasy ; he says, If I take the loan of this for a month or so, it will clear my feet ; no one will know. I will get quit of all these cursed duns and debts that tease my soul out. If I am called upon for it, I can make some excuse ; or, at the worst, my father or brother will not let me go to the wall for thirty pounds. I will save every penny till I make it up, and turn over quite a new leaf. No sooner has he quieted conscience than a new train of ideas enter. "I will just go this once and let them see I am not the poor devil they take me for." The parasites renew their blandishments ; win from him at play ; praise him for his liberality ; and in ten days his pocket is empty, and no debt paid ! The thirty pounds disappear like water poured on a quicksand ! Peace of mind is now quite gone ; at every look he gets and at every question he is asked, his quaking heart punishes his criminality by anticipation. His personal appearance changes ; he is frequently unwell, and has no animated conversation for the customers. At last the day comes round. The gentleman who paid the money meets the master. "You are not a good shopkeeper, Mr Smith ; you were absent when I paid my account two months ago." Mr Smith is perplexed, and is civil ; comes home, sees the account is not marked paid. He, the poor criminal, cannot deny it. The master takes an acknowledgment of his fault in writing, which he promises never to use against him if he behaves himself. He will not tell his father nor his brother ; but if he does again commit any single act of a criminal nature, he will be down upon him ; for he is a judicious and Christian man, and would not shut the door of hope. Meantime he is discharged without a character, or the hope of ever getting one. He

gets temporary employment as a clerk, never as a confidential ; is often at home idle, living with his friends ; and, after a struggle, contrives to set up a dram-shop.'

A stronger and more striking instance still was adduced by Mr Bluff:—'At the same time as I came to Mr Crafty's, Cleverman came to be an apprentice with us. It was impossible for me to keep him in order, he was such a waggish rascal ; he made fun of me, and forced me to laugh at myself. He was such a droll, he could mimic any man or woman, the sound of their voice, their manner of walking—everything ; and he made such ridiculous faces, you could not help laughing till your sides were sore. Many a time, when I was as angry at him as I could be, he would bark like a dog or mew like a cat, as if in the next room, and then all would be in a roar of laughter. Cleverman beat all ever I knew ; he could do everything. He could sketch your face or your house, or draw a pattern to measurement with any one I ever knew, and in a moment. Nothing could beat him at arithmetic and writing, so correct and so swift. An apprentice : he was fitter to be our master. He was fourteen years of age when he came to us, a little fellow ; but he shot up into a great man and a handsome fellow before he left us. What was it that Cleverman could not do ? He would box you ; shake a fall with you ; sail a boat with you, oars or sails ; swim or dive with you ; hit a mark with the fowling-piece or ball-gun at three hundred yards ; sing with you ; dance with you ; ride a horse with you, as he did once at the races ; play the flute, the violin, and the sweet Irish bagpipe. I am sure I have said enough. But Cleverman liked drink, and he liked the lasses ; and his mother, whose idol he was, kept him full of pocket-money. He never did an ill-natured thing to my knowledge. At last he just went and came as he pleased ; and he was such a bad example to all the others, and so subversive of my (Bluff's) authority,—for he made a butt of me,—that, although his father was one of our best customers, yet Mr Crafty took him one night, and give him, over his toddy, a hint that a lad of such abilities as his son could not be expected to bend himself to learn our slavish business ; that his abilities would be better appreciated in various other situations which he pointed out, and made the old man rather proud than otherwise that his son was dismissed from Crafty's. Well, his father took him home, taught him his own business, and made him work hard ; and he soon came to be so proficient that he took the whole management, leaving his father second best, while he

greatly improved the business. But he often visited me, and had a glass of rum and water. You know something of him yourself, and you will hear the end of him.'

I may continue Mr Bluff's story. 'When I knew Cleverman first, he was a well-filled-up man of twenty-seven years of age, evidently a *bon vivant*, as his full blush-coloured face testified. I have heard of him, that he had one bottle of ale or porter, as the case might be, and then, he said, one could drink their toddy leisurely, and enjoy it. He was a strong man, and could bear much. At a subsequent period Cleverman married a very handsome and beautiful little woman. No question need be raised as to her merit. He was too shrewd to mistake the character of any female; and so far as I have ever learned, she was all that could be desired to make any man happy. About five years elapsed, all fair and promising, he, I have no doubt, combating manfully the insinuating, encroaching foe who was stealing away his manhood, his health, and his fame. The enemy prevailed, and all the world knew that Cleverman was drinking hard. By the time he was a man of forty he was abandoned to the habit, bloated in countenance, and overgrown in person. He was cut off suddenly, and left a widow well provided for, but no family. His father lived to see this sad end of his clever, precocious, and once so highly promising son.'

Oh, love of drink, devouring monster, causing ruin and wretchedness in a degree greater by tenfold than any other evil existing in our boasted country, thou art our most dangerous, deadly, and still prevailing enemy; the destroyer of the bloom of youth; undermining and corrupting the vigour of manhood; rendering the wise, the shrewd, the discriminating, drivelling, stupid, and contemptible, if not vicious!

I sing no cuckoo song. The above was written before the days of Father Matthew, or Gough, or any of these great names who have made crusade against the love of drink. It was a great shock to my national pride when I first read in print that our own Scotland was one of the most drunken of the nations of Europe. In as far as this memoir can show the dangerous nature and insidious workings of this enemy, it shall be done as I go on to narrate the thoughts and wants of my life.

I now informed Mr Crafty that I would need to leave him at the end of my time. He thought this was perhaps meant to screw a higher salary out of him; and he said, if I would remain, he would advance my wages to seventy pounds. This was very flattering to me

no doubt, and I felt it so; but I told him it was not in my power to remain, but, as requested, I would stay as long as to put the books and accounts in perfect order. Mr Bluff knew I could not with any propriety stay, and explained all. My reluctance to return home was great, flattered as I was in Glasgow, and dark as was the prospect of reanimating my uncle's business, certain that I would need to use coercion, equally unpleasant to him as it would be to me. Eliza, too, gone, perhaps never to return! But I felt bound by every tie of honour and conscience to do all that lay in my power for the sake of my two best friends—Helen and my uncle.

I remained six months longer than my engagement with Mr Crafty, and I thought he paid me rather shabbily at last. He gave me at the rate of my former salary, one pound a week, and a present of three guineas,—making in all twenty-nine pounds three shillings. I fully calculated on thirty-five pounds, as half a year's salary at the rate of seventy pounds, the amount he had offered me for a re-engagement; so I was five pounds seventeen shillings short of my expectations. A serious disappointment this; for I had been spending my income freely, and I hoped to be able to carry home with me at least a five-pound note. I still think it was shabby. I had stayed over the extra-hours time of the year, wrought hard, and instructed my successor with much painstaking. But there was no remedy.

I visited all my old friends ere I left: old John Hielandman and his wife, and Mr Richman, who invited me again to take dinner with him on Sunday, which, however, I declined.

Mr Bluff and Symmetry had ever been my fast friends. I felt great reluctance to leave them. But certainly my best and most valuable friends were Mr Frank and Mr Dainty's families. A son could not have felt more at ease or freedom than I did in going in at any time to call upon them. Week-day or Sabbath-day, morning, noon, or night, always welcome, always received in that frank, cordial manner which enabled me to read my acceptableness in their cheerful and happy looks. I took a week to repay all by some mark of attention for their many acts of kindness to me. I held a tea-party for the young people of the Frank and Dainty families, which they to this day reckon as an era in their lives; for I exerted myself to amuse them, and bursts of merriment were evidence of my success. Told them stories; showed them all my books; played at juvenile games; set them a-singing by setting them the example, and although the laugh predominated over

the song, it did just as well. A few sweetmeats with a glass of currant-wine finished off, and I gave them a convoy home. I was very much pleased when our lively apprentice-boy invited me to tea at his father's; and I got thanks from them for my kindness to John, with a present of 'Brooke's Gazetteer,' a four shillings and sixpence book. I had a more weighty undertaking in entertaining my friends—Mr Bluff, Mr Symmetry, and all the other lads of the shop, including Jack the apprentice; and Cleverman was invited to help us to enjoy ourselves. My landlord was included in the party, which numbered twelve in all.

We had a very plain supper, yet very substantial; and it was as well, for there was such a cut and come again amongst us sharp-toothed youngsters, that there was very little left. I had got the square bottle of whisky from Leith for the occasion. Strange work it was—carrying coals to Newcastle; and no good reason could be given, but that I got it for nothing through Helen's agency. Smuggled whisky was rife then. After our bread-and-cheese and a tumbler of porter, the decks were cleared. Cleverman now came into play, and toned us up to the pitch of harmony by his sweet Irish bagpipe. We had one medley which lasted half an hour, a verse each round of any song you pleased, and sing all your song if you liked. It was well kept up amidst much merriment—hearty laughing from merry hearts. Cleverman occupied every spare moment with his waggy and jokes. It was 'Strike the ball, and keep it rolling,' and it was kept up in style. Cleverman made the punch, and was quite in his element to see that every one got fair play. Our little smart apprentice gave us his song, 'The Battle of Trafalgar,' amid much applause. I would have recorded this finale with much more pleasure if I could have said there was no excess; but the shopman at the lowest wages,—a hard-working, dour Highland fellow, and very poor,—lost the road home, and having met a policeman who put him to rights, he, in the generosity of his heart, rewarded him with the only coin in his pocket—a three-shilling piece,—which he bitterly repented of when he came to his senses. I can only account for his being worse than the others, by supposing he, poor fellow! had been rather greedy after a good bellyful, as it came in his way so seldom. The three-shilling piece was long kept up against him, and so he got the skaith and the scorn both, as usual. It is with sorrowful feelings I have arrived at the close of my sojourn in Glasgow. Take it all in all, it was the happiest period of my life. With Bluff,

Symmetry, Walter, the Daintys, Franks, Steadyman, and others, I formed friendships that lasted for life. My visits to Glasgow of a week at a time have ever since been periods of great enjoyment to me.

Arrived at home, I sank for a week or two into apathy; all was so quiet, dull, and declining-like; but the very circumstance of having been accustomed to close hard work rendered idleness quite intolerable to me. James and I first took an inventory of the stock. He was much pleased with the way I wrote down the inventory, and the new face I put upon the goods. So also was my uncle; but he was not quite so well pleased when I reduced the selling price of some of his articles which had been some time on hand one-half. I was obliged to produce my notes from Crafty's to satisfy him that it was possible. The stock amounted to seven hundred and twenty-five pounds. It was too highly valued even at that, and my uncle could not be brought to understand that his goods were not worth more than those of others. He had always believed, that because he paid dear for them, they must of course be superior in quality; the very reverse being often the case. There was no money in the bank, but a number of acceptances current, to be provided for as they fell due. Even this would require exertion; and I proposed to make out, and send in, every outstanding account. He demurred to this, for the strange reason, that some had stood over for years. My answer was, that they had the more need to be looked into now. Others, he said, had a contra account, and he was not sure but that he had got some pounds from one or other of them. My answer was, 'Send in your account, and let them send in theirs, and we will see then where the balance lies; for depend upon it, if they had thought you owed them money, they would have been at you long ago.' And so, by degrees, we got nearly all the accounts out, and the per contras began to come in, containing many items and many transactions which my uncle could neither affirm to be due, nor deny. In his perplexity he would say, 'I dare say, after all, it may be right; we must just let it go. He is counted an honest man; but I am sure I do not remember of all these matters.' One thing I had thoroughly made up my mind to—that unless I got the uncontrolled management, and in my own name, I would not interfere at all; that is to say, if he would put his whole goods—seven hundred and twenty-five pounds—into my hands, I would pay him the amount as I could realize it, which would take a year, or perhaps

two; he to keep his manufactory in his own hands, and on his own account, as before.

James agreed to stay three months with me, while I got acquainted with every circumstance of my uncle's affairs; but when his time expired, I was as far from any arrangement with my uncle as ever. He shifted his ground every two or three days; for his cronies brought it over and over, and made it the subject of discourse, and rendered him jealous of me. He often wished me to accompany him to meet some of these advisers, and have a talk over it (a public-house crack), which I invariably declined. I would consult with no one, except Winterman junior and Mr Meadows; and with these we had many fruitless conversations, ending in procrastination. He was impatient of the subject in the mornings, and I would not go into it at night. Thus far, at least, we arranged—that I was to get my board and half of the profits, and he the other half, but I was to pay him no interest on the stock; and this was the way we settled at last. Meantime, I could see that his ready-money trade was not worth the name, and that his customers had many of them died out. Still there was about half of the old trade remaining, which was better than nothing, and yet I would want the *eclat* of a new shop and a new stock.

But before we had finally arranged our affairs, a new element came under our consideration. An old merchant, a bachelor, who had carried on business in the same line, and who had made his two thousand pounds, wished to give up business, as he was becoming infirm. He had saved rather than made money, for he was a great economist. His shop was in a fine situation for a retail trade. His cash retail had been eight hundred pounds a year, and his credit business about as much. As soon as my uncle heard of this, he thought he had found out the philosopher's stone at last. We called upon the old man, and my uncle insisted on his going at once with him to the public-house to have a crack about it. The old man yielded; and when he was asked what he would drink, he answered he did not care what it was, for it would be but little of anything he would take; for, added he, 'It's just two years past since I was in a public-house, and it was with yourself, settling our yearly accounts.'

My uncle remarked that he would have but little chance of trade from the publicans if he was so poor a customer to them.

He replied—'I want none of their trade; no one will make much

at their hand, calling and calling again for their money, drinking all the profit, and neglecting all their other business.'

He had been twenty-four years in business, had lived comfortably in a sixteen-pound rented flat, and kept a maid, who was also house-keeper. He never had a shop-assistant; locked his glass door, or half-door, at meal hours; and the customers might wait or go about their business elsewhere if they chose.

All anxious as we were to get his business, the nature of the stock was a great bugbear to us; for in truth it was the fragments and the fractions of a lot of the commonest, trashy goods—old-fashioned, out-of-date picked things. His shop not being well cared for, had a ragged-regiment-like look; but there was no chance of getting the premises without contents. We treated off and on with him for a few weeks; at last we bargained to take all without reserve, at the market price of the day, except such things as were damaged or unsaleable—these to be valued at what they were worth; disputes to be referred, and payments to be divided into four parts,—one-fourth part cash; bills at six, twelve, and eighteen months, with security, for the other three-fourths. The stock came to £690. How or where did we get the £172, 10s. to be paid in cash? My uncle was intimate with Thomas Vintner, who had always money to lend; and he agreed to give us the money, on condition that I should, as principal debtor, grant him my bill, and that my uncle and Winterman junior should indorse it. A retired merchant—a poor, emaciated creature, but known to be rich—signed our second bill. He was not likely to require favours from us, which was so far good. The third bill was signed by a customer, and the fourth by Winterman junior. I could not think how Winterman junior was so ready and obliging; but I learnt afterwards that uncle was one of his securities for a cash credit of £300. So all was arranged at last; then a supper and a bowl of punch to James Neelton, uncle, self, the landlord, and the three securities,—a party of seven in all. Such a transaction as this must, according to the practice of the times, and out of respect to our friends, be concluded in this manner. The bill amounted to £1, 16s. 6d., which I called and paid to Thomas Vintner next day. I was happy and fortunate in having James Neelton for a friend. He made his appearance every day, as before, and talked to all the customers; and not only so, but kept shop for me for a whole year while I went to my meals. He was a gentlemanly little man, of weakly constitution—a Latin scholar, a great reader, and a

strong democrat ; but he was truly a friendly creature to me, although a little snappish when I stayed too long at meals.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN EFFORT FOR INDEPENDENCE.

BEHOLD me now on my own legs!—but not a free man ; for I was under acceptance for four bills—six hundred and ninety pounds for Mr Neelton's stock. I had also to provide for my uncle's acceptances coming due ; and although I had got my uncle's shop goods, yet there was an almost total want of popular stuff, such as was wanted every day and every hour. To supply this demand, I was compelled to give orders, and pay for them when due, to a considerable amount. It absorbed almost the funds ; for the two old stocks, when put together, valued at fourteen hundred pounds, wore away very slowly. I felt I was now in a fix ; but my spirits were buoyant. I was now somebody. When I had arranged the goods in the best manner, made everything look fresh and clean, got the whole shop outside and inside painted, and the windows arranged quite differently from the former sombre appearance, I felt that I had caused some sensation in the neighbourhood. Many stepped in to look around them, and compliment me. My uncle proposed to have relieved me to meals ; but I studiously declined this, for I was determined, now that I had got the grip, to hold on to it, and have no intermixture or confusion. Sometimes I gave offence to my uncle ; his demands on me for cash were very trying ; but I had a list made up, and ready at all times, of the sums I had paid out for him, and as it was of very considerable amount, it generally pacified him. He used to be so lavish of money, that he felt the curb now put upon him almost intolerable. But I had the whip hand, and Mr Neelton always backed me up. It was a part of an agreement that my uncle should see and know every book and transaction as well as myself ; and when he saw a regular set of books well kept, invoices coming in from the most respectable houses, goods arriving, checked off and handled in the smart manner I had learnt, he was quite proud of it.

At the proper place I omitted to say, that when I returned from

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Glasgow, all my money was completely spent ; so entirely indeed, that when the coachman looked to me for his sixpence, I told him I had not a copper left. He did not believe me, and turned contemptuously away. For the first time in my life I felt remorse for my want of economy. I ought to have brought home fifty pounds, had I been watchful, and restricted my expenses ; for provisions were much lower during the last half of my time in Glasgow, and I had had nearly double the wages in that latter period. Besides, will it be believed that the whole twenty-five pounds which Mr Stately paid me, and which my easy generous uncle allowed me to keep, had also been quite frittered and nibbled away ? All this was brought to light, to my shame, by an incident. Mr Crafty had a sum of cash owing to him by a certain Sir Something, who lived, as he thought, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. The amount was one hundred and fifty-six pounds, and it was surmised that he was going abroad. My instructions were to proceed without delay to his law agents ; tell them I must have an immediate settlement ; and not to accept of any evasion, but say that I must trouble the knight with my personal presence at his castle, if they did not settle. Mr Crafty made an error in supposing the knight's place was near Edinburgh ; it was almost fifty miles away. But as my instructions were peremptory, I obeyed immediately ; for I knew all about the account, and I got a letter from the agents all but pledging themselves that the amount would be paid in three weeks from that day ; and it was so. But I have diverged, and passed beyond the point I wished to touch most upon. I was without a shilling ; and when I coolly asked my uncle, before starting, for a five-pound note, he looked at me with amazement.

'Where is your own money ?'

'Well, I have none.'

'Are you in earnest ?'

'Oh yes ; I have no money.'

'Is that possible ?'

'It's quite true.'

'Well, I am sure, James, you surprise me : I never saw the twenty-five pounds you got from Mr Stately ; what did you do with it ?'

I said I spent part of it when I was in Fife, and part in expenses on different things ere I went to Glasgow ; that my wages did not keep me at first, and so it just wore away by degrees.

'Ay, ay,' said he, enjoying his advantage very much, 'that is a

pity; I thought, as I had never heard about it, that you had put it into a bank. But did you not save money when you were on the higher salary? and you told me Mr Crafty gave you a present of three guineas when you left him; is this all gone?’

I said I had books with me that cost me three pounds; and I bought a pair of boots and a greatcoat before I left, which cost me together five pounds.

‘Very important articles for you; but when do you mean to wear your boots and greatcoat?’

I made little answer; I felt that the exposure of my total want of economy had placed me at a great disadvantage in our then pending negotiations, and given him just cause to distrust my abilities to conduct any larger concern with propriety.

He enjoyed this advantage over me far more than he grudged the paying over to me the five-pound note, which he procured in some way; and when he gave it to me, he said, ‘I hope Mr Crafty will repay you, and that you will repay me; for I can assure you my five-pound notes are not so plentiful as they were wont to be.’ At any time afterwards, while planning our future arrangements, if we happened to differ, he would give me a satirical admonition not to be too forward, and to mind that I was but a young man and not very good at taking care of money. It was a sore part with me; I did not like to have it touched, and it served my uncle for a long time, till the subject got threadbare.

Eliza had now been absent from Edinburgh three-quarters of a year, during which time Helen called frequently at Mrs Winterman's for tidings. The lady was on that subject reserved and rather close; yet she admitted that she felt the want of Eliza very much, for she was very useful and handy among her lodgers, and well worth her room. During this period Helen had only received from Eliza one letter. It gave a description of her uncomfortable state at home. She had, as she said, been so many years absent that she was almost looked upon as an alien, and, she was sorry to add, treated as such. For so thoroughly had Mrs Winterman influenced her mother to believe that she had acted with extreme folly and obstinacy in her rejection of more than one suitable offer and settlement, that they treated her with much coldness, and seemed to consider that for this reason her time spent in Edinburgh had been quite thrown away. Then, as they said, all the expense she had put her mother and uncle to for clothes and

education had been completely lost. 'You know,' she added, 'that Mrs Winterman allowed me board for services; and I think I was worth it, for, one day with another, I am sure I was nine hours in the twenty-four at her work. I seem a cast-away among them; but having the approval of my own conscience, I am the better able to bear up against this cold treatment. Why could Mrs Winterman not let me alone? She was for ever planning and urging me to do something or other against my will. I still hope we may all come to be more happy, after a short time. You know there is a young family here. I sew and act the schoolmistress among them; and in the affection of the young artless creatures, I find some compensation for the coldness of the others. But it is very, very dull in the country in winter; and I feel it the more acutely after gay Edinburgh, and Mrs Winterman's bustling and noisy manner of life. Well, but I am half persuaded that I have nothing to do but exercise patience. Heigho! but it is a tedious cure.'

This letter was never intended for my eye; but one day, about cleaning time, I saw and recognised the handwriting amongst a parcel of loose papers, which Helen had emptied out of a drawer, and forgotten at the moment to replace. I immediately snatched it, and secreted it until I had an opportunity of reading it, which I did some five or six times, and fixed the contents in my memory. I do not mean to vindicate myself from having, in this instance, done an action rather mean; but the temptation was too great for me. Helen had written in reply to this letter, but received no answer. She wrote a second time two months afterwards; but not hearing even then, she with sorrow gave up hope of any further correspondence. She felt sure there must be some very strong reasons for it; and, indeed, she had an idea that perhaps she had come to reciprocate the affection of a great beau of a cousin—a very handsome fellow, who knew his personal qualities very well, but who was such a swell, and such a shallow fop, that Eliza used to say she could not endure him.

After the bustle of shifting all the goods from my uncle's premises to those lately occupied by Mr Neelton, and all cleaning, painting, and arranging, were over, I began to find that in truth I had not work for above two hours a day. I began to feel very dull. The rest of my time was spent lounging in my door-way, sitting kicking my heels on the counter, or again, for the tenth time that day, counting the silver in the till. Our old and ill-assorted stock of goods moved off so very

slowly, that my power to order and to pay for new and current fashionable goods was quite circumscribed; for my uncle's bills were falling due, and he had borrowed money which must be paid back. The house had to be kept; and evermore there were demands upon me which, as soon as I had gathered twenty pounds to be put in bank, took away the half of it, and stung me with disappointment. In fact, I found I was engaged in a tough fight, out of which I did not see very much prospect of emerging. Thus I proceeded very slowly; and many who paid me a business visit as a new man from Glasgow, and found I had little else than the old lumbering stock, did not call again soon. To wile away my idle time, I read the newspapers from beginning to end, advertisements, state of the markets, and all; copied poetry; read a novel occasionally, and so on.

In such a situation, a good neighbour is a great blessing; and this boon I enjoyed. Right opposite to me there was a very active shop-keeper, like myself, a thoroughbred. He had served an apprenticeship in Edinburgh of five years; after which he had been an equally long period in Liverpool; for his father, although rather an able man, insisted that his son should thoroughly understand his business before he would give him money to open shop for himself. The prudence and propriety of this course was well exemplified in the case of my neighbour, whom I shall call, as the neighbours did, Liverpool. Industry was ingrained into his very nature. He was up by six o'clock every summer morning, and had a dip in the sea before he opened shop at seven; he then fell to sweeping and dusting, sprinkling the floor and pavement with water if it was dry and warm weather, and if wet, with a little sawdust. In consequence of the novelty of his fashions, his shop was well frequented from the beginning. His goods were truly of the best quality. He was very cheerful; had abundance of frank, sensible small talk for every one, and was quick in despatching his customers. His shop displayed so much taste, cleanliness, and neat arrangement, that 'Liverpool' was elevated at once to a position of importance. He had been four years in business when I became his opposite neighbour. The popularity he had at first acquired he took care to keep: always in his shop; always cheerful, frank, correct, and obliging; thoroughly honest in all he said and did; very fond of a joke; yet Liverpool had as warm and as tender a heart as any one I can think of. Those who envied him his prosperity tried to fix on him the stigma of 'dear.' 'Liverpool takes his price,' was care-

fully circulated; and many who gave ear to the whisper went off for a time, but soon came back, for nobody had such uniformly good things. His maxim was, 'Have always the best of goods, and get a profit on everything you sell.' Sometimes he was forced by circumstances to deviate from this straight line; but he came up to the mark again as soon as in his power; for where, in any kind of business, is the man who has not to meet unprincipled opposition, and been forced at times to sell at prime cost? It is a base and a mean way to ingratiate one's self with the public, to sell at or below what you pay. It is simply meant to deceive. The cheap seller always intends to have his profit out of you at another time in some way, or off some other article. This was not Liverpool's way. Many dealt with him because, although they did not expect great bargains, they were sure of the best goods at a fair price. On the second day after he heard from Mr Neelton that I was coming to be his new neighbour, he was on the outlook, and came across, shook hands, and wished me joy and profit out of my new undertaking. By his frank, cheerful, and talkative habits he did much to keep my mind buoyant, to drive away my blue devils, besides being my banker for any little sum from five to fifty pounds.

One very dull day near the end of September, trade being more than ordinarily flat with me, it being the time of the harvest, I felt quite spiritless. My uncle was needing all the money I drew to pay off his debts, for I would not allow him to grant any more acceptances; and he was so sensitive, irritable, and so unhappy, I could not withstand him. Every crave he got went to his heart. Mr Neelton came to let me to tea. My mind was absorbed in gloom; and as I walked right forward into the parlour, I believe I was in reverie. What was my astonishment, on lifting my head, to find my eyes met by the vision of Eliza, as she sat at her accustomed social chat with Helen! I was never more electrified—probably never more delighted! The gloom, the reverie, vanished in a moment! 'Dear me, Eliza, what an unlooked-for pleasure! Of all the things in the world, to see you here, and so unexpectedly!' And looking her full in the face, and still holding her hand: 'How much you are improved!' The provincial accent, the sweet tones, the pleasing looks, which had so long haunted me, were all presented again to my living senses. I lost all count of time; and I was struck with consternation to observe, on looking at my watch, that I had been an hour and three-quarters absent from the shop. When I

returned, full of excitement, Mr Neelton was sitting on the counter. The moment he saw me he jumped down, and said quite in a huff, 'I thought you were never to come back!' I made an excuse that a friend had called, and that I had been delayed a little longer on that account. Not yet appeased, the old man exclaimed, 'Your best friend will be your own shop if you attend to it as you ought, but not otherwise,' and away he went for the time in high dudgeon. Next morning, the kind-hearted, placable old man made his appearance at the breakfast-hour, as quiet as if nothing had happened; but he gave me in a soft voice a caution: 'Now do not stop longer than is necessary; for there are many things which occur when the master is out of the shop, which are never so well done as when he is present.'

The terms on which Eliza returned to live with Mrs Winterman were not easily to be defined. There was a tacit understanding that no reference should be made to past grievances. Mr Homespun visited occasionally; and perhaps Mrs Winterman thought, that after he was restrained from being importunate, he might become more agreeable to Eliza, who had got a taste of a hard home, and half welcome, and might come round. We did not see Miss Miller above once a month; and I have no doubt that the cause of our so seldom meeting now, was a consciousness that we had each of us disclosed to the other the fact of our love. The letters which had passed between us, the sympathy she expressed in all our affairs, and that which Helen and I exhibited in regard to her, spoke plainly. We ourselves required no language, but a kind look; and I have no doubt that it was her exquisite sense of what was due to female decency and propriety, that prevented her from meeting me often. In short, we were not so easy in each other's company as formerly. Our hearts were full; but under all the circumstances, we knew it would be next to ruin for us to carry matters farther at present.

In all the round of my thoughts, I always came back to the conviction, that I ought not to allow myself to inveigle Eliza into any engagement having matrimony in view. My present prospects were so discouraging, that it would be, I thought, most selfish in me to try to entangle her for life in a situation where she could not live in that plenty and comfort to which, by her education and accomplishments and real goodness, she was entitled. My uncle's opinion frequently occurred to me, that a person young in business, and struggling with the world, ought not to marry any woman who had feelings above

slavery; and my own sense told me, that I would either be lifted into an expensive mode of life, which would ruin me, or else that my necessities would reduce her to the condition of a drudge. Neither of these two alternatives was at all pleasant. But I continued to sip, sip on at the sweet potion of love and hope, and indulge in gay dreams of future happiness, very little likely ever to be realized. I was therefore inclined to let pass a year or two, seeing Eliza occasionally, and taking my chance of competitors; pleasing myself with the idea, that if any of such a dangerous complexion should take the field, I would then freely appeal to her election; and I did cherish the hope of success.

A year wore round in this way, in the course of which I took every opportunity which offered itself to evince my respect and affection. A beautiful apple, if it came in my way, would be kept till I should see her, and then I would tell her how long it had been laid aside for her; or a purse, accompanied by a speech to wish it might never be empty; or if I could get a fine flower, I would ask Helen to take it up, and say gently it was from James. But very different matters now demanded all my management. The bill granted to Thomas Vintner for the money borrowed of him to pay the cash instalment to Mr Neelton, when we entered on the stock of his goods, was within three months of falling due. I called upon him; made him a present of goods, value £1, 15s.; paid him his interest; and he granted a renewal without hesitation for another year. Why did I make him the present? Because I feared he might have taken umbrage at my never having gone to his house with any of our customers or acquaintances. Previous to its becoming due the second time, he called upon me, and said if I could give him a bill for the amount, signed by the same parties, at three months, so as he could get it cashed, he would be much obliged to me, for he had just had an unexpected call made upon him for money, and that this would relieve him just now, and by the time it fell due, he would have plenty of cash to renew it as before. I hastened to comply with his request, being glad to oblige him in this small matter.

About a week before this short-dated bill was due, I went to call upon him to see that all was right, and that we might arrange all before the day came. He was standing at the door of his house as I turned the corner of the street; but, on catching a glimpse of me, he instantly retired. Upon my asking for him immediately after, he was denied, although I was quite sure he was within. I called next

day, and the next, and was constantly denied. This strange conduct made me strongly suspect that there was mischief a-brewing; that he had taken offence somehow, and did not now mean to keep his promise of renewing the bill. So I wrote him a note, reminding him of his promise, and saying that I had no shift at present, but to rely entirely upon his promise for advancing the amount on the day the bill was due. I got no answer. I now informed my uncle, and Winterman junior, whose name was on the bill, and they were quite sure Vintner meant mischief; for, on comparing notes, hardly one of us all had been in his house as customers, although pretty often in others, and we had no doubt he now meditated revenge. As an interim measure, Winterman junior accepted a bill to us for eighty pounds, which I got discounted. I had twenty pounds beside me, and I thought I could not be at a loss now, believing that Vintner would be willing to renew at least half the amount,—that is, provided we could see him, which was doubtful. At ten o'clock of the day the bill was due I found Thomas walking boldly in the sun before his door. I came up to him, and told him this was the day the bill was due, and that I was trusting entirely to him, in consequence of his promise.

'If you trust to me,' said he, 'you will be wrong; for I have not just now ten pounds at my command in the world. I believe I am owing you about that sum. Send me a discharged account, and I will pay it.'

'Bless my heart, sir,' said I, 'how is this? You know I had your voluntary promise, when you asked for this short bill, that by this time you would have plenty of money, and would take up, and renew it; and you know I wrote you a note to make you aware, and you did not answer it.'

'More's the pity,' said he; 'I will pay your account as I said. I can do no more. I have been disappointed myself; and,' continued he, seeing me about to reply, 'you need not say another word about it, for I cannot help it.'

Quite angry now, I replied, 'The bill cannot and will not be paid. I will go over and explain the circumstance to the banker, and I am sure he will believe what I say.'

'Do as you please,' said he, firmly and deliberately, equally sharp with myself by this time; and so we separated.

Burning with anger, I came back to my uncle and Winterman junior, who were waiting the result with considerable anxiety. When I told

them, we saw there was no time to be lost, and we all went off on different courses to borrow ; but when we met again, we were still forty pounds short. In this emergency, I thought I would try my neighbour, and told Mr Liverpool all the story. 'Just what you might expect from that vindictive fellow Tom Vintner. I am sure you might have known him better ;' and he handed me thirty pounds, all he had by him. On my way to the bank I called at several doors, and made up my sum at last, but the ten pounds was mostly in silver. It was at the time when the old silver was being taken in, and before it was known that Government would take the old genuine coin at value. It was feared that they would only take it in by weight. Four pounds out of my ten pounds in silver was refused. Here I was again, within five minutes of the closing hour. Fortunately I met a customer at the bank-door, who advanced me the sum I required, and the bill was paid at last. I had an acute headache from the anger, disappointment, and humiliating circumstances attending the whole affair.

Three of the payments were now made to Mr Neelton, viz., the ready-money instalment, the six months' bill, and the twelve months' bill,—all these were now paid ; and when the last bill fell due, he was quite willing to take payment of it at our convenience, which was several years. This was now absolutely necessary ; for in the same period I had paid of my uncle's debts three hundred and fifty pounds, and little comparatively of his old stock was sold ; so I was rather ill off at times. Liverpool was very kind to me. He gave me money whenever I wanted it. At one time I owed him one hundred and thirty-five pounds, which he allowed me to keep and repay at my own time. This state of things could not have existed had I not been creeping into excellent credit. Every one saw I understood my business, and attended to it ; and this goes a very long way to establish one—even farther than the possession of an adequate capital in the hands of a fool, or a person ignorant of his proper business.

During this summer we had a visit from the vivid and charming Mary Meadows. It had long been a promise on her part, and she had got our length at last. She was the same mirthful, lively creature she used to be ; but at times there appeared a thoughtfulness about her which did not harmonize with her general demeanour. The explanation is, that Mary, notwithstanding all her hilarity, was of a pious cast of mind. This appeared from the way in which she conducted herself during the Sabbath she was with us. Her everyday frolicsome disposition was

laid quite aside, and a calm, quiet serenity of expression settled on her countenance. The remarks she made upon the books on our table, and the sermons we heard, exhibited a depth and correctness of thinking which I did not imagine belonged to her; and the earnest emotion she discovered, while conversing upon religious topics, showed beyond doubt, that her piety was not the cold calculations of the head alone, but carried the generous interest and warm feelings of the heart along with it.

I embraced the opportunity this visit of Miss Meadows afforded me to engage her, and Helen, and Miss Miller to a strawberry-feast in a delightful garden in our neighbourhood. It was a pleasant, sunny, yet airy afternoon; and none but those who have been similarly situated can truly fancy how delightful it is, in the morning of life, to roam among flowers and fruits with those of the softer sex whom we esteem and love. I enjoyed it all the more that there were no rival beaux present to cast me into the shade; for I was not dandy enough in my own estimation to have supported the rivalry of fashionable young men, the presence of whom would have reduced me to comparative silence. As it was, at this time the ladies unanimously declared they had never seen me in such good spirits. I recited snatches of poetry; sustained successfully playful arguments, in which Miss Meadows was my able opponent; and expatiated rather eloquently on the beauty of all around me. But really it was an inspiring scene! Why? Were not the ladies—two of them—eminently handsome and engaging, with their white muslin dresses flowing to their feet, and their coloured scarfs, bonnets, and ribbons fluttering around them in the breeze? Had we not youth, health, beauty, dress, nature in her gayest and most beautiful mood,—her fruits and blooming flowers scattered around? There was a large old elm in one corner of the garden, at the foot of which the temporary booth was placed, shaded by white curtains; a round table in the middle, and camp-stools, as many as a party might require. The fruit-trees, of which the garden was full, had been planted about twenty years before, and, consequently at their very best, were now on this delightful 10th of July evidently bringing to maturity a beautiful and varied crop of fine fruits. The leaves rustled in the refreshing gale; the multitudes of little birds were hopping actively about in the trees, helping themselves to the sunny side of a ripe cherry, and, when tired even of such fare, entertaining us from the broad elm with their lively notes. Miss Meadows prevented

any stagnation of our enjoyments by one or other of her humorous expressions, and made us pay, from time to time, the tribute she exacted of all her companions—a hearty and unmeasured laugh.

Our host now intimated to us that our repast was ready; and we adjourned to the little booth, throwing the curtains wide asunder, that we might not lose the outside beauties. Strawberries and cream—vulgar words! Why, the lowest of the low crowd to such enjoyments. Yes; but I hope, that because our best blessings are also the most common, I shall not upon that account ever undervalue them; rather endeavour at all times to be grateful for them, and chiefly thankful because they are so common. Well, our strawberries were served up in a capacious china bowl; and really they looked most inviting—bright red, cool, fragrant, and delicious. A jug of real cream, and a basin of finely-pounded loaf-sugar, completed the materials of our collation. It was enjoyed; leisurely conversation flowing on between hands freely; and when satiated with this fine treat, Helen produced a small flat vial of cognac, along with a little glass, that we might none of us regret our feast. The gardener received four shillings for his fruit, cream, and sugar, and a bumper out of our little bottle to the bargain; so we left him as happy as we were ourselves. If an afternoon spent in this way, at such a time of life, and in such company, and under such circumstances, is not truly and essentially happiness and enjoyment, then I know not what is.

A single circumstance alone showed that one of us was not quite easy. Just as we were leaving the garden, Eliza gave me a look, and immediately afterwards fell behind. I did the same, while Helen and Miss Meadows passed on a little. She then said hurriedly—

‘I wrote you a letter once; where is it?’

I was surprised; and answered, ‘I have it.’

‘Where, where is it?’ she anxiously continued; ‘not in your trunk, I hope?’

I said it was, but that it was enclosed in a little case which was locked, and had a secret spring that no one could open except myself.

‘You had better give it me back,’ said she in considerable agitation.

‘Why, Eliza, I hope you are not serious. I would never wish to part with that letter:’ and the blood rushed to my face as I felt conscious of the full extent of my words.

She seemed to pause for a single moment; then pleased-like said,

‘Then be sure to be careful to keep your trunk always locked ; for I cannot bear to think that any one should know I wrote you that letter. I saw your trunk open before we came away from your house ; and you know how readily accidents happen when letters are left carelessly lying about. You once saw one of mine which I wrote to Helen (I had confessed to Eliza). Now promise to take care.’

I did so, and we separated.

At the end of my first year I had got an apprentice. Not that I needed him, while Mr Neelton continued to relieve me ; but he was tired of the gratuitous work. New ways are always more or less displeasing to old men, who see many of their maxims and practices set at naught ; and I would not admit of my uncle to be my proxy at all. He had such a loose way with him, and threw the place into confusion ; besides laying hands on the cash—his own, to be sure ; but then I could not spare it as fast as he wanted it. I might, moreover, have got my victuals brought to me as my friend Liverpool had practised for some years, which would have saved expense. Considering also the smallness of my trade, which had not reached two thousand pounds of sales in all the year, I ought not to have had an apprentice for some time, and until I needed him ; for not only would I have saved his average board-wages of four shillings and sixpence per week, but I would have been compelled for my own advantage to be always in my shop to catch every opportunity,—a necessity which the apprentice gave me the means of evading. The superfluous leisure I now had upon my hands tempted me away too often. When I had a young man idle in the shop, and was quite idle myself, I felt restless and dissatisfied, inclined to rove about ; and I often went in the afternoons or evenings to have a bottle of porter when I had no need of it. My friend Liverpool was very fond of a single bottle of best London stout, and we had frequently one together. This did not look very hopeful. Then, at the end of my second year in business, I made an attempt to obtain a bank credit for five hundred pounds. The securities I offered were my uncle and myself, Mr Meadows, and Winterman junior. It was declined ; and I was deeply chagrined at this failure, for I was now exceedingly pinched for cash. I was still oppressed by about four hundred pounds of my uncle’s stock, and could find no way of pushing it off. It would sell in course of time, but it behaved to be slowly. That dead four hundred pounds was a great punishment to me. I was not able to buy new goods ; and for want of a full and

proper assortment, several who would have been my customers, were obliged to go elsewhere, for almost every one of my brethren in trade had a better assortment than I had. Another circumstance annoyed me very much;—a set of credit customers had got into my books who paid me very ill,—many of them, indeed, did not pay at all,—and the proportion of bad debts which I made in this way was far too great. The declining nature of my uncle's connexion was in a great measure the cause of this, most of those bad payers having been good customers to him once, but had now grown old, and easy, and careless, and broken-down in circumstances. My uncle always supported their cause; he said they were honest men, and would pay some time, if in their power. This was enough to satisfy him, but not to put money into my hands. I am not trying to justify myself in my management; I am only narrating it,—let others judge. It often occurred to me to go out with samples and prices; but I was checked by the certainty that such orders as I would get would be chiefly for common goods, of which my stock was very light, and that I would be asked for many other kinds of which I had none at all. So was I paralyzed.

Meantime, the neatness of my shop and my own close personal attention were rapidly improving my credit. Mr Stately was still in the same way as formerly; friendly enough, and recommended several very respectable houses to call on me. Mr Bluff had also sent several good houses to me; so that my credit was if anything too good; and as I felt ashamed of the smallness of the orders I could with propriety give, I was tempted to overstep the bounds, in hope that I could 'push them off' before the day of payment came. Nor did I seldom do this; but it was without a profit, and to an inferior class of people, with the result of increased bad debts. But as I had always been able to pay my bills when due, I found not a little countervailing advantage in the favourable terms on which I could now buy; and the pleasure of having connexion with such respectable houses was to me not only flattering, it seemed to increase my self-respect—a great point.

Noticing changes as I go along, I may remark that Mr Stately was not now in the same position as when I was with him. He had cleared about seven thousand pounds it was said, and he thought himself impregnable and entitled to do as he pleased. He now remained double the time from home on his journeys that he used to do; always taking the whole week, sometimes staying even till Monday. It was even thought that he was not doing quite so much business as he did for-

merly. When at home, he attended afternoon and evening tavern clubs regularly. He had not the least inclination for marriage. Though quite able to have maintained a wife had he so chosen, he preferred living with his mother at a board of fifty pounds per annum, and spending lavishly on his irregular pleasures. I regret to say it; but divest Mr Stately of his fine person and his fine clothes, and some scholarly attainments, and there was not much left. His tastes were very low, and his habits had a libertine cast about them; but he was honourable as to money matters, and had an ostentatious generosity about him that covered a multitude of faults. Probably, had he kept an account of his expenses as a bachelor, he might have found them equal in amount to the expense of an establishment. There was one peculiarity about him which threw him always on the current of chance. When not busily engaged in the activity of packing up goods or writing up his books, his time hung exceedingly heavy on his hands. Yet, though a Latin scholar, *he had no delight in reading*. I never knew of such another case of total indifference to books in any one who had got a tolerable education. So, taking into consideration that his time was only partially occupied, that he had no wife or family to while away his vacant hours with, that he could not stay in his warehouse when idle, and that he cared nothing for books,—even a newspaper being too much for him,—it is no wonder that he should be absorbed at last by evil habits. Meantime, his sheet anchor that kept him steady was avarice. This passion had ruined his business; his ambition was to have a large profit. Then, when he could not get his price from first-rate people, who gave over dealing with him, he was forced to take up with second-rate, who paid by bill at as long a date as possible.

For such a man marriage was apparently the only remedy. It is, indeed, always the sovereign mean against lapsing into vicious and indulgent habits; yet I have not forgotten that there are two sides to the question. If a man has been placed so as to see an ill-matched pair snarling at one another from morning to night; if he has seen a silly, mean, narrow-minded body of a wife who could not by any means keep her tongue quiet, wearing out her husband's patience, until contempt takes the place of love; if he has seen a dour madam who would sacrifice every kindly feeling that she might overcome her sorrowful yet kind-hearted husband, heart-broken by this sad failure to realize his fondest hopes of loving and being beloved; if he has seen these, and

many other such, he may be excused for having a dread of marriage. But there is not much risk of such a failure if common prudence guides the choice. Is she of respectable people?—Not an invalid in constitution?—Has she proved herself an affectionate daughter and a loving sister? Have you known and studied her character for at least one year? If so, and your heart approves, then you have not much to fear. But in the married state you must bear and forbear, as in all others. How many are sorely tried by a business partner! and yet by forbearance mutual prosperity is ensured. We must bear with our relations. Fathers and mothers are frequently unreasonable; sons and daughters forget themselves; our maid-servants require very peculiar treatment; but, when under a kind and judicious mistress, we find them faithful, affectionate creatures.

Is there one sound, faithful, loving forbearing heart in the married state? then all will ultimately go well. No sharp retorts; no bitter taunts; no words of contempt to rankle for ever in memory. Take refuge in modest silence till the heat wears over, and then all will be well; for the more forbearing of the two parties will ever have the ascendancy and the power over the other.

CHAPTER XV.

TEMPTATIONS.

SOME time previous to the period of the ending portion of my last chapter, I occasionally frequented a club that met in Goode's Tavern, High Street, Edinburgh. I can scarcely say how I got introduced; but about half-a-dozen of the score who, one way or another, made it up, were my schoolfellows. It was, altogether, a chance assemblage. A parlour was always kept for them by Goode, who was himself a lively, merry creature. Two master tradesmen were at the head of it; both of them thriving, with a prospect of inheriting considerable property at the death of relatives. One of them was a shrewd fellow,—kind-hearted, ready-witted, fond of practical jokes, very ready with his tongue,—in short, a wag, who loved to be thought so. The other was brimful of all sorts of *local* knowledge: of very ready coarse speech, and exceed-

ingly impudent; and yet did not seem aware of it. He was very generous and lavish of his money—a careless deil-may-care sort of fellow. He thought himself a match for the other; but all who had penetration saw that he was always his butt. Between these two an eternal war of tongues went on. Both had an uncommon power of language, and were but little under the restraints of decorum. They seldom agreed, yet were always together; and the delight of each was to contradict and oppose the other, endeavouring to get the better of him by a trial of tongues—sarcastic and biting language—sometimes very broad; and if one could put the other out of temper, he followed up his victory by loud words and noisy laughter. There was, however, much keen wit in these moments—very amusing to us non-combatants.

I cannot, as I have said, well tell how I first found my way to Charlie Goode's; but having once got accustomed to it, it was long ere I left off the beaten path. If I had been intimate in a few other families, it might have saved me from this entanglement. But I am beating about for an excuse; the fact is, I was beginning to love drink and company both. This club pretended to be called the one-bottle club—either ale or porter. Malt liquor was more largely drunk half-a-century ago than now; as witness the much greater number of pot-bellied citizens. There is not now one for ten that then existed. But Charlie Goode's club was more properly often a two-bottle club,—ay, and not unfrequently, with a tumbler of punch to keep the malt down. Sometimes I got away for sixpence; sometimes one shilling and ninepence, or even two shillings; for if the great majority fancied that they would be the better of a pie, or crab-claws, or oysters, or finnan-haddocks, there was sure to be a sit in; and it is not easy for any individual to pursue separate measures in a society like this. I always strove to get home by ten o'clock; but it was sometimes nearer eleven o'clock,—never beyond it, unless something very extraordinary took place, such as in a singing night, when the glee was in vogue—the most enchanting to me, as I liked the enjoyment, and could do my part. Charlie was a pawky landlord; and if any rarity was very good, and very cheap, just about the time we were leaving, a tray with something nice made its appearance, and was received with shouts as a gift—a dangerous one; for not only did it require to be honoured by being washed down by toddy—a consequence well known to Charlie,—but Charlie behaved to be one of us, drinking his own toddy at our

expense. Probably out of the month I was ten nights at Charlie Goode's. I ever had a horror of being intoxicated; and would make my way out through thick and thin, when the sederunt verged upon excess. Yet even with this limitation, I was quite conscious I was doing wrong, and going very far astray from my duty. I had, in fact, become fascinated by it; and though many an evening I proposed to myself to go straight home, and was determined, some one (probably on the watch) was sure to pick me up, and, putting his arm through mine, walk me off as a matter of course. Indeed I confess to a little passive negativeness in my character; my strongest point of favour with all being my inoffensive disposition. Then the newspapers were always on the table; and frequently we had cards, and fierce disputes in consequence, but never blows.

When I first began to absent myself from home, Helen waited for me every night. But when she found it was becoming a habit with me (she must have felt very sad at the thought of my following the example of my uncle), she locked the door and went to bed at ten. Yet she never reproached me nor remonstrated with me on the subject of my irregularities,—her nature would not bear her out in an effort of that kind; but she would frequently say with a little emotion in her manner: 'You were late last night,'—'You were late again last night:' and sometimes in a tone of hardened despair, 'You are always late now, I think,' as if she thought me becoming incorrigible. I was not afraid she would inform Eliza, because I knew her nature would prompt her to conceal a fault with the utmost care; nor would she ever tell one friend a painful truth of another unless forced to do so. Her short and simple remarks, as stated above, touched me pretty sharply. My uncle sometimes said a few words to me; but, poor man, he had not much room. But when I thought on Eliza—pure, sincere, amiable, and lovely, and, as I sometimes believed, bearing a strong affection for me—I became sorely distressed in my mind. I loathed myself. I vowed amendment; I vowed to shake off the entanglement which had surrounded me. I vowed, but I performed not. Evening appeared, and again I gave way. Some one met me; or I would just take one tumbler and come away; or I persuaded myself that I did not feel very right, and would just go this once, and then have done with them entirely. Any night that I expected Eliza to be at my uncle's, I was never from home. While I wish to show my own misconduct in a striking yet true light, without palliation, yet I do not wish to be

misunderstood, as if I had run on to the extreme of libertinism. I did not,—thanks to my constitutional coldness, to my reserved and somewhat timid temper, and to the influence of religion and an ever active conscience. That I was on the broad road, there can be no question. But I had not gone on far. I was ever at my post to let my apprentice to breakfast. I never missed a six o'clock appointment to go in summer weather to bathe. In fact, all I have said of myself would have been held by many as venial, and a good joke; but I was quite aware of my danger, quite aware I was going astray, and that the end of all these things is death. I may surely include in the number of my salutary restraints from evil, the image of Eliza, which from time to time rose like an accusing angel in my thoughts, startling my conscience and saying to me, 'Ah, James! can you pretend to love me, and yet frequent your club and associates? You are spending more money than you ought; and you are acquiring habits that will prove your ruin. How differently did I hope of you! I may become your wife; but are you not preparing misery and ruin for yourself and me also? Oh, be warned in time! Think of your good uncle, poor man, now dependent on you; on Helen, your more than sister, whose heart is sore for you; and as you love me, oh, James, do give up this while it is time!' But, above all, I thank God, who restrained me within bounds; who did not suffer me to fall utterly under the power of this dangerous temptation; who had, indeed, imbued me with a horror of excess and of intoxication, as well as of all kinds of obscenity—a disposition in me so well known that it was seldom my feelings were hurt by any individual application. But this also I knew—that once past the Rubicon, and all is over. Burns, who knew mankind well,—none ever better,—says:

'But oh! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling.'

In writing as I am doing, I may be called a canting hypocrite; self-righteous; a saint, etc. Well, I am pretty sure, if I had fallen as far as many members of the club did, and which their after history will show, I never could have had heart or nerve to write this true account of myself.

In one respect I had no great merit in my resolution of amendment. It was fortunate for me, that, when I had exceeded the bounds of temperance in drinking, I was so constituted that my enjoyment in a great measure ceased. My anxiety to get away became overwhelming;

and often, when sevenpence or eightpence would have paid my share of the reckoning, I would leave a shilling to get away. While, with most of the others, the more they exceeded, the more hilarious, witty, eloquent, and extravagant they became, reckless of consequences, more prone to quarrel, and provide food for bitter repentance. There is no sentiment more prevalent among such associations than that all are as bad as themselves: 'However demure or sanctified any individual may seem, it's all humbug. Cursed hypocrites! they are as bad as we, if all were known. These long-faced chaps are more sly, but not a bit better than we.' Words these generally applauded and echoed from one to another; and if at this proper moment any one of the company should recall any notorious failing of a professor of religion—the case of any decent moral character having been convicted of any gross offence—the happy corroboration is hailed with shouts and laughter as a confirmation of their favourite maxim. I cannot doubt that many have had their good resolutions subverted, and could date the commencement of their ruin from the day that they first believed in this dangerous and lying doctrine. Teach a man that resistance to temptation is vain, and that *none* persevere in self-denial, and he is pretty likely to surrender to the next summons. Let him not, as he values all that is good, believe it; for, to use the club slang, it is all humbug—a baseless lie.

We had Despot very often at the club. He thought himself the head of it, while he also was but a puppet in the hands of Wittyman; and while all quailed before Despot's severe satire, pompous language, and dignified form, Wittyman would cock his funny eye at him, as if he had found out a weak place; then came some leading question, and Despot would shrink,—for he knew by experience to what an answer would lead,—just as an elephant would make a detour to avoid a very small snake. Despot was the best scholar we had; the best read, the best informed man of our society; but he was exacting, severe, and bitter in his irony; and, when aroused, his wrath knew no bounds. No one held him in chains but Wittyman; and he was gentle with him.

Among those whom I met at the early bathing hour was Mr Grandison. He had been seven years in London, and left it with reluctance, to come down to Scotland to inherit a business worth seven hundred pounds a year, vacant by the death of a relation. He was a very happy combination: well grounded in Scotland, well polished in

England, he had all the flowers and choice expressions of the refined cockney transplanted into his ordinary conversation, which made it quite felicitous; however, he was a little reserved and gentlemanly among strangers; and when out, quite at his ease. He had been at our club perhaps a dozen of times, and was losing his reserve very fast. On the evening in question Despot was playing chairman, lecturing us all round in his full-toned pompous way:—

‘Yes, gentlemen, depend upon it, these sneaking pretenders to sanctity are no better than they should be. They are worse; for they are cowardly hypocrites into the bargain. Innocence! stuff. Where is Paradise, that I may have a look at this innocence of yours? I rather think we are all pretty much alike; nay, I’ll swear to it.’

Whereupon Grandison struck in: ‘Come now, Mr Chairman, none of your sweeping conclusions. You would send us all to perdition, would you? Others may think very differently from you.’

‘What!’ cried Despot, kindling at this manly interruption; ‘you claim exemption, do you, eh?’

‘To be sure I do, for myself and many more. I would be sorry to think so meanly of my fellow-creatures as you seem to do. It would be a nice comfortable doctrine, if you could think all were as bad as yourselves. But that won’t do, Mr Chairman.’

Despot was stung to the quick, and all the savage burst forth in his reply: ‘Oho! here, gentlemen, is something worth your notice. An innocent swain, a paragon, a *rara avis*; look at him well, that you may know him again. Have we not been lucky to-night to have got a saint amongst us, eh?’

Grandison, rising with dignity, and very angry, said, ‘I am not accustomed to an atmosphere like this, where a man dare not express his sentiments but he must have the finger of coarse and vulgar scorn pointed against him. I will therefore bid you all farewell,’ laying a shilling on the table.

Several, who were touched with vexation, called out, ‘Stay, Mr Grandison, this is more than your share.’

‘Oh, never mind that! give what’s over to Kitty.’ Exit from our club; and we saw Mr Grandison no more.

I was not present; but Wittyman told me of it afterwards, and finished by blaming Despot severely. I was very sorry Grandison had left us. He was a noble-minded fellow, as I experienced afterwards.

Many thoughts arose in my mind in connexion with this affair of Despot and Grandison. Place a libertine in a company of those who hold the laws of God, the testimony of a good conscience, and the esteem of the virtuous in respect : let him there try to promulgate his licentious assertions, his vicious maxims, and he will find the words stick in his throat ; let him dare to talk jovially of his attempt at seduction—sometimes alluded to amongst us—the indignant frown of insulted virtue would at once reduce him to silence. Can one who has planned and carried into effect the ruin of some once lightsome and innocent creature, look the father or the brother of his victim in the face ? No ; and it is strange, too, how low soever in the scale of society such a father or brother may be, he cannot meet the glance of their eye ; he falters, averts his head, escapes up an entry, if there is one at hand, or steps up to some person, or into some shop where he had previously no intention of calling. One of the most imperious and forward young men of our club I once detected shuffling and sneaking out of the way of a decent old shoemaker, whose daughter he had seduced while a domestic in his father's house. Is this fear no evidence of conscious guilt ? Is it not his conscience that makes him a coward, and covers him with confusion ? Try him further by this test. Has he a sister whom he loves and esteems ? Has he fixed his affections on some pure, though lowly, fair one ? Rather awkward suppositions. Yet these are the true tests. And, in the case of Despot, how would he have looked if any one had dared to say a disrespectful word of his two very lady-like sisters ?

Meanwhile, I continued to visit Eliza frequently ; and both of us occasionally encountered looks and remarks from the old lady, which showed that a slight suspicion had taken root in her mind, which we thought it prudent not to awaken further. I was gradually getting more sure of her love. I have often been at a loss to know why, amid all the vicissitudes and changing circumstances, I had made so much progress into the affections of this young lady ; especially knowing, as I did, that she had several times been addressed by individuals of far superior pretensions and higher fortunes, of more polished and fashionable manners, flowing conversational talents, finely dressed, and wealthy to boot. I can only account for it thus : I loved her with all my heart ; and she was not slow to see the devotedness of my affection, for females are in these matters quicker of perception than our sex. Then my love for her was so respectful, that it must have appeared almost as a species

of worship; and this has a mighty effect on many women. Besides this, she knew me thoroughly in my connexion with Helen and my uncle; my farming affair; my sojourn in Glasgow; my views; in short, had got mixed up in my confidences. My life seems at this period a strangely chequered narrative. My infatuation as to the club was kept in some bounds by my love for Eliza. It was a struggle between good and evil. When I had opportunities of seeing her frequently, I shunned the club; but when I was again left without that safeguard, I relapsed, and went as formerly. Yet I felt exceedingly uncomfortable; my reflections were bitter in the extreme. The reflections I had upon myself for my unworthy, and, as I may say, treacherous conduct, in concealing this part of my behaviour from her, stung me at times most bitterly. While writing *now* this part of my early history, I can hardly think I am narrating what is true; it seems to me now so unworthy, unreasonable, and totally inexcusable.

I make no apology for my chequered narrative, because life is chequered and irregular; and so I proceed to say that, while taking a short walk with my friend, early in the ensuing spring, she informed me that Mrs Winterman had granted her permission to pay a visit to the family of Mr Withers, a farmer in the neighbourhood of Dalkeith. Miss Withers had been two seasons boarded in Mrs Winterman's, and had a strong affection for Eliza. The health of the latter had evidently suffered of late; and the visit to Mr Withers' farm was to be extended to a period of from ten to fourteen days. When Eliza informed me of her intention of visiting Miss Withers, I asked her when she meant to go. She said, 'Sunday, if it is a good day; and to be there in time for church; a walk always does me good; or, should it happen to be a bad day, Monday or Tuesday.'

I hesitated for half a minute, then said, 'If you have no objections, I would be very glad to be allowed to accompany you.'

'I will be very happy of your company,' was the answer, with such a look of love and affection that shot light and warmth into my breast, making me for the time one of the happiest of men.

During the few days that had elapsed since this walk was agreed upon, I had not been idle. I had procured an elegant new pattern spring vest, and a handsome silk umbrella in case it should rain. My gold watch seal and key were brushed up quite bright, and suspended by a new green watch ribbon. My hair had been cut by one of the fashionable hairdressers. My breast displayed the finest frill I was

master of, done up for the occasion in Helen's best manner. In short, everything was done which I thought would smarten me up.

The Sabbath was propitious. I was first at the trysting-place,—the first park opening after you passed the toll. I had not leaned over the bars above five minutes when, in the distance, I observed her coming up. Never was she more pleasant to my sight than on that sweet Sabbath morning. She also was dressed out in something new—a white corded muslin dress, handsomely made. The well-remembered favourite scarf, bordered with beautiful Indian flowers on a yellow ground; a neat hat trimmed with my favourite colour—light blue—suited her complexion nicely. She was pale, but still with the lady-like look. I walked slowly, to get as much of her as I could, though I knew she was a little pressed for time. Under such circumstances, almost any scene or time of the year or kind of weather would have been tolerable to us. But this was a lovely, still, clear Sabbath morning; the sky dotted over with numerous clouds, through the openings between which the welcome and warm rays of the sun now and then lighted up our path in sweet alternation; not even a current of air, for the cottage smoke rose in a perpendicular continuation to the sky; the universal quiet that reigned everywhere around; the cheerful green of the face of the earth; the expanding buds on the hedgerows and trees; the feathered creation rejoicing with all their might; and, to crown all, a love that was only looked, not spoken. Intoxicated by the pleasure of our walk, I forgot the dictates of prudence; I went all the way; was introduced at Mr Withers'; went to church with them, and spent the day much to my own satisfaction indeed. In returning, I was convoyed a mile by Miss Withers and Eliza; and I received permission to meet her again on a fixed day, to escort her on her way home. When left alone, by the departure of the ladies, I could not help having my fears for the consequences of my very public appearance that day with Miss Miller; and I especially dreaded what Mrs Winterman might say or think, for I could hardly hope that one of her prying disposition could remain ignorant of this circumstance. However, this was but a passing thought; and I abandoned myself to reveries of the most pleasant nature.

On her return, I was at the three-mile stone, to which Miss Withers had accompanied her. I was made very glad by the favourable change in her whole appearance,—a healthy bloom and a tranquil expression of countenance had replaced the wan and wasted look.

We walked slowly homewards ; and our discourse took a very serious turn, after we were left to ourselves ; for, by a kind inquiry or two on her part regarding my uncle and Helen, I was encouraged to narrate to her all the principal events which had passed of late concerning our affairs. The disappointment of the cash account, the vexation with Thomas Vintner's bill, the kindness of my friend Mr Liverpool,—all that I could think of to prolong the conversation was circumstantially told. We were too early. Wishing it to be dusk ere we walked into town, we diverged from the high road to make a circuit ; and we did not fall short of interesting discourse until we parted at Mrs Winterman's door, at seven o'clock, nearly an hour after sunset. I understood afterwards that Mrs Winterman, presuming she had come alone, was rather severe upon her for being so late. Eliza replied that Miss Withers had come a long way with her. Mrs Winterman was not to be put off in this way. She insisted on knowing if no one else had been with them ; for she was sure Miss Withers' relations would not let her be out so late as this upon a public road, and alone. ' Was there no one else accompanying you at all ? ' Eliza now acknowledged that a gentleman had been with them, and had accompanied her into town. This only whetted her curiosity ; and, on pressing her hard, Eliza playfully said, ' Perhaps, Mrs Winterman, I am under restrictions ; it might have been Miss Withers' sweetheart, or my own, who knows ? and so you see in that case you will excuse me. I am not so young now ; you might leave me a little to my own discretion ; and I will tell you all about it as soon as Miss Withers and the gentleman give me liberty.'

Mrs Winterman spoke no more ; but her fixed look bespoke her anger, and her determination to sift the matter to the bottom ; and she was not one likely to remain long ignorant of every particular, for her curiosity upon this, or any other topic, when once excited, was never allayed until she had wormed all out. Nothing more, however, transpired for a month ; only yet by looks and allusions she continued to let my friend know that she was on the scent, and would hunt it up. She met Mr Homespun and questioned him, and was greatly disappointed when she found he knew nothing of the matter, for she had a fond latent hope that he might have been the favoured man. She became more decidedly active, but elicited nothing. At last, Mr Homespun, whose attachment to Miss Miller was well known, was met by an acquaintance who had seen us on the road at a time we

had stopped to listen to the birds in the young wood. He was then mounted on horseback, and the sound of his horse's hoofs made us both turn round, so that he had a full view of us both. He knew Eliza at once, having been at a party with her, where Mr Homespun and Mrs Winterman both also were. About six weeks after this he met Mr Homespun, whom he pleasantly bantered by mentioning the circumstance; and he described my appearance so well, having also seen me at church, that Mr Homespun could have no doubt who the gentleman was, and he lost no time in calling upon Mrs Winterman. The result may be easily divined. Eliza, on coming into the room afterwards, observed enough of manœuvring to satisfy her; and when Mrs Winterman asked Mr Homespun to stay for a bit of supper, and despatched her to the kitchen to make the necessary arrangements, she at once divined what was coming. Nor was her divination a mere prophecy: it was confirmed by the expression of their countenances when she returned to the parlour twenty minutes after. Mrs Winterman's face expressed vexation and anger, and Mr Homespun looked scornfully pleased that he had unravelled the mystery. Supper over, Mr Homespun soon took his leave; and immediately after, Mrs Winterman, calling for her bedroom candle, gave Eliza one long searching look, which she afterwards said was hard to bear, and then abruptly left her without bidding her good-night.

A week passed over most uncomfortably for Eliza. Mrs Winterman's manner towards her had undergone a change; in conversation she was abrupt and brief as could be, and her looks cold and stern. Helen called, according to her wonted practice: she also got a little of the gloom poured upon her; few words passed; and Helen, sensible that there was something wrong, took an early leave. Three days after she received a note from Eliza, requesting that I would call upon her at a particular hour next day. Of course I did. Mrs Winterman was absent; and in a few words she told me that the storm had burst—all was discovered—and Mrs Winterman was incensed far beyond what she could have anticipated. Her words were nearly as follows: 'After a week of most uncomfortable silence and sternness, Mrs Winterman could bear it no longer, and her first words to me were—"Little did I think, Eliza, that after all the pains I had taken to get you forward in the world, all the expense and trouble you have cost to accomplish you, you could have treated me as you have done, and demeaned yourself by such improper conduct. To deceive me in this

way I did not think was in your nature. I must say it is the most cruel ingratitude I have ever experienced." I answered, continued Eliza, 'that I did not think it was fair to use such words; for I did not see that I had either been guilty of improper conduct, or had in any way demeaned myself. This reply so incensed her that she spoke a great deal to your disparagement—spoke of your uncle's habits, and of your own flightiness in leaving your business, and running away like a fool to be a farmer; but I will not repeat what she said, for it was exceedingly disagreeable to me to hear it, and it would only renew my vexation to repeat it again. But in the end she said, "Tell me, Eliza, to what extent you have encouraged James Meetwell to pay you attention, and what has passed between you, for I must know; and I am sure you will not tell me anything but the truth." So I answered her, that nothing particular had ever passed between us; that you had only once spoken of love to me, but that I had forbidden you to speak of it again. Mrs Winterman was not quite satisfied with this explanation; but hoping to gain more by fair means than by harsh conduct, she appeared to be better pleased than she really was.' When Eliza had finished, she asked me not to think of visiting or seeing her for a considerable time at any rate; 'for,' she added, 'I see Mrs Winterman is bent against you in the meantime.' I said I would certainly comply with her wish, however painful it might be to me, for which promise she thanked me; but, observing that I was much dejected, she begged me not to be so, for it gave her much pain to witness it. I answered, that if I was sure she did not join Mrs Winterman in wishing me banished from the house, I would be happier. She coloured, and said, 'Oh, James, this is too bad! you know I am not indifferent about you, and I think it is rather unkind of you to force me to say so.' I felt I had spoken rashly, and was sorry for her emotion; made a humble apology, which was accepted, and so we parted.

CHAPTER XVI.

MORE CROSSES AND HOPES.

MEANTIME, although I had promised to absent myself from the society of my friend, I could not help thinking about her every hour of the

day. Had she not once said, 'Have patience, a time may come?' Had I not treasured up the words; and had they not passed through and through my mind many times a day? Unable longer to restrain my pent-up feelings, I took to writing, and having scribbled over many pages, I bought a sheet of the largest gilt-edged letter paper, and having ruled it closely—say, forty-six lines in a page—I exerted myself to the utmost of my power, and condensed the whole within the compass of my paper. The style was as polished, as correct, the matter as expressive, as it was possible for me to make it; and as for the writing, it was as fine as it lay in my power to execute. I premised by apologizing for taking this liberty unasked, and stated in extenuation, that surely, as I had gone into voluntary banishment, this mode of conversing with a dear, though absent friend, might be still allowed me without blame. I took a view of my first impressions of herself, and mentioned every turn and fluctuation of hope and despair which, while yet only an apprentice lad, had occupied my mind respecting her; recurred to my country scheme, and acknowledged the correct view she had taken of it; and stated that, although she never was aware of it, she had always occupied the first place in my thoughts, and never had been out of my mind wherever I was. I dwelt particularly upon my joy when I received her letter in Glasgow with the lock of hair; vindicated my character; detailed everything I could think of up to the present hour; and asked her if one situated as I was, and such as I was, ought to have been so spoken of as Mrs Winterman had done. In the end, I produced a remarkably well-written letter of one hundred and forty-five lines. It was, in all, the work of a week. I was delighted that I had found out this employment, and I looked at my production with much self-complacency. Let Mr Homespun try his hand to beat that, I thought! Then Eliza must feel pleased at such a compliment. Moreover, during this week I had the light and approbation of my conscience—for I had never once been a night from home. All these circumstances put together gave me a most happy buoyancy of mind! I only waited and earnestly wished that I could have made Eliza as happy as I was myself, but that, I felt sorrowful to think, was beyond my power; yet I felt quite sure she would be more happy and justified in her own mind after she had got my letter. I even went the length of thinking that if Mrs Winterman should see it, it would teach her to respect me at least. In conclusion, as all I had said in my letter was founded in fact, and as Eliza could not fail to

appreciate it as such, I felt assured it would bring comfort to her mind and clearness to her ideas of our position.

For the delivery of the letter I had penned with so much care, I could think of no better way than to employ Helen. If she found no opportunity she was to bring it back ; but she succeeded ; and it was put under lock and key immediately. In a few days Helen received a note from Eliza, to which the following postscript was added for me : ' Thanks for your very beautiful letter. I see and value the great pains you have taken ; and, as you say it does you so much good to be thus employed, I do not forbid you to compose another such ; and if you put less flattery and more sincerity into it, it will be still more acceptable ! Remember that it is at the greatest risk you can repeat this. Hawk's eyes are upon all my motions ; so do not be rash, I beseech you. A month hence I will expect to receive another. You know the hand.' Thus encouraged, I persevered, composed, corrected, and selected with the utmost care. I wrote three letters as carefully done up as the first was ; and in each succeeding one I grew warmer in my language, until I almost asked the important question, —if I did not, my meaning was very obvious, for the covering was very light and transparent. Still I received no answer ; but indeed I had stated that I would not expect or exact any unless it were quite agreeable. So she had taken me at my word, and no reply came. Meantime I was seeing the club occasionally ; but in the whole three months Helen was never to bed before I came home. This was so far good, for I felt more confidence in my own ability to overcome this my besetting sin. I was also living on rather better terms with my uncle. All which circumstances tended to keep me lightsome.

One morning I met a companion who had been seeing the steamboat away, and he mentioned that he had noticed my acquaintance, Mrs Winterman, go on board as for a long journey, with cloaks, luggage, etc. ; and he mentioned several circumstances which convinced me of its truth. I was at her door immediately after breakfast. I asked for herself—no great boldness, especially as I was owing her seven shillings, which would have been my excuse in the event of my companion having committed a mistake, as I expected. She was not at home. I now asked for Miss Miller, and she made her appearance immediately, with a flush of pleasure and surprise on her countenance, which I took for a good sign. It was true Mrs Winterman was gone on a visit to a friend for five days, to effect, as it was thought, a com-

promise of a law-plea which had been pending for a long time with a relation. Before we had said half of what we wished, she was obliged to leave me to wait on some ladies. But before I left her I had obtained leave for Helen and myself to take tea with her next evening. Of course we were punctual; and we did not weary, for we stayed supper, and were exceedingly happy. Mr Winterman was of our party. The young advocate was also present for a time; both of whom understood Eliza's wish too well even to mention to the old lady that Helen or myself had been at tea. The old gentleman was very deaf and infirm, and the son was too young to be observant. Yet I must say, that in seeking this interview, we rushed recklessly on danger. But then Eliza could not have come to us, for she was not allowed to be absent from home when she had so much to do; and particular orders had been left by Mrs Winterman that she should devote her whole time to her house duties, in consideration of which she would get more freedom after her return. I begged and insisted, therefore, for an hour next evening—from eight to nine o'clock—for the purpose of having a quiet walk, and, after much hesitation, she consented.

We met to a minute; and, strange enough, we had little to say. A strange oppression was upon us both; and the beauty of the evening was seized upon as a topic of relief. It was indeed a beautiful sunset, amidst an assemblage of gold and purple clouds, the light gradually fading away into the sober gray of twilight. Still we were silent, as if our thoughts were too deep for utterance. At last I began to approach the subject nearest to my heart, and to try to get an avowal of her love, as I might not see her again soon. All of a sudden she confronted me with such a face of distress as startled me at once: 'James, dear James,' she cried, 'forbear, I entreat you; not a word more; it must not be. Oh! are we not well and happy without any further explanations? If I were to say anything particular to you, or you to me, I would render myself miserable; for Mrs Winterman will cross-examine me on one point for an hour, and ask the same question in twenty different shapes; my condition is almost insupportable. It is scarcely a month since she held so hard at me for a whole day, that after tea, when she was about to resume her dreadful question on question, I slipped out at the back-door, and bolting it after me to prevent interruption, prayed earnestly to God that I might not be driven out of my judgment. If,' she continued, as tears of anguish

started to her eyes, 'Mrs Winterman shall hear of our meetings this week, I do not know what may come of it; for I will never tell her anything not strictly true, whatever may be the consequences. You must, therefore, not ask to see me for two or three months, that her suspicions may die away.' Then seeing my distressed look at this unexpected and painful narration, she added, to comfort me, with a faint melancholy-like smile, 'I am sure you need not fear *now*.' I need not describe my feelings, nor what I said; I was much distressed in my mind at having caused her so much suffering, and I parted from her with boding anticipations of the future.

One week passed away, and I heard nothing from her or of her. I feared that her distress of mind might have brought on illness; and as this idea fixed itself in my thoughts, I became restless to know something of one kind or another. I was somewhat relieved by ascertaining that she was once at church; but my satisfaction was qualified by the further information that she looked pale and worn.

A month had now elapsed. Mrs Winterman had gone to a friend's in the country, and Eliza was with her. One evening, as I was about to shut shop, a letter was put into my hands by a servant-maid whom I recollected as the new one at Mrs Winterman's; she was off immediately. I knew Eliza's writing. I shut up shop as quickly as I could, and hurried home; bolted myself in my bedroom, and opened my letter, which began with: 'Sir,'—I was confounded, but read on,—'After long and anxious deliberation with Mrs Winterman, in which she has shown herself most anxious to promote the true welfare of both you and myself, mature reflection, and a wish to retrace steps which have, on the part of both of us, been rash and premature in a great degree, I have resolved to ask you to join with me in making an effort, however painful, to consider all that has passed between us as the result of youthful inexperience, and not at all such as should be binding upon us. I am sure it will be for our mutual advantage that we do not meet again but as ordinary acquaintances. I have written this letter under the inspection of Mrs Winterman; but do not, on that account, suppose that the sentiments are not mine. I am sure you have known me long enough to believe that I would not, under any circumstances, put my hand to a letter if I did not approve of its contents; and, whatever my feelings may be, this letter contains nothing but what has the sanction of my most deliberate judgment.

I conclude by wishing you prosperity and happiness in all your undertakings, and I remain, Sir, most respectfully, your obedient servant,
ELIZA S. MILLER.'

After reading this letter, I looked around me to recollect where I was. I doubted if I was awake; I felt as stupid as if I had got a blow on the head. I could not understand it. I could not believe it to be true. I walked round the room, stopped, looked into the mirror,—it was myself I saw there. I took the letter again and read it a second time; it was just the same as before,—her own writing, her own signature to a certainty. It could not be her own sentiments, I was sure of that; and yet how was I to think, for she was truth itself, and would not put her name to a letter she did not approve of? As this thought gained place in my mind I felt a sinking of spirit like sickness; but then, again, she had been overruled and persuaded to do an act which I am sure she was averse to. Next, it was not her composition; of that I was sure,—stiff, stupid style,—it was not her diction at all. She had been obliged to write it at Mrs Winterman's bidding. Does she not say, 'Whatever my feelings may be?' Oh, there is some daylight and some comfort here! Her feelings are with me, although her judgment is not. She is sorry for having had to do this. Yes, yes, there is light, comfort, hope! I will pursue it. So, taking my hat, while I heard Helen calling to inquire if I would be back to supper, I was out and away without giving her any answer. It was past nine. It was only two miles and a half to where Mrs Winterman was living. I would be there before ten o'clock yet, and that was not a late hour. Well, what will you do when there? said reason. I mused over this, and slackened my pace, for I was now very warm. I cannot expect to see Miss Miller except in presence of Mrs Winterman, and what can be the result of such a meeting when all parties are so heated? It would certainly produce a *fracas*; and tell most of all against myself for rushing into a friend's house, at such a late hour, like a fool. I turned my face homewards again, and took more time to walk. What, I thought, could I have said to Mrs Winterman? I felt assured she was very angry with me, and I could see no way to win her over to my side. She might ask me, Have you money to furnish a house,—two hundred pounds at least? I could not say I had. If she asked me further if I had an income of two hundred pounds a year at least, what could I say? A dwelling-house at twenty pounds of rent would

require an income of that at least. These reflections sank down upon me heavy and cold; and I reached home a very different man,—mortified, dejected, and good-for-nothing,—and just in time to help uncle and Helen to pick a haddock, which we washed down with small beer, the liquor demanded by my uncle's present fit of abstemiousness.

I slept not a wink, and was up next morning by daybreak, and at Mrs Winterman's shortly after six o'clock. I walked past the house again and again; still the shutters continued closed, although the morning was fine. I recollected that the hour of rising was seven; and therefore, as it was near that hour, it was likely enough that either the mistress or the maid might see me before Eliza would. To prevent this, I walked to a barber's shop almost out of sight. It was open, and some little business going on. I perused his advertisements—'Bear's Grease' and 'Macassar Oil,' 'Warranted Razors' and 'Patent Razor Strops,' etc.—again and again, until I attracted the notice of the master, who came to the door to shake a towel he was busy dusting with. 'Fine morning, sir.' Having responded, he next tried me with—'Any news last night, sir?' I gave him some civil answer, but sheered off a bit; and all the while I was keeping a close watch over the doors and windows of Mrs Winterman's house. At length the maid appeared, rubbing and dusting at the parlour window. I crossed the street, holding up my finger to her to attract her notice. I knocked softly, and the door was opened. I apologized for intruding on them at such an early hour, but said that I was particularly anxious to get one word of Miss Miller; and, while I spoke thus, I endeavoured to put a crown-piece into her hand, but she drew back, with—'Miss Miller is not at home, sir.' Not prepared for this, I was quite taken aback: and while I stood undecided, she was in the act of shutting the door.

'Stay a moment,' said I. 'If you could inform me where Miss Miller is gone to, I would be very much obliged to you;' and I forced the money into her hand, and closed her fingers upon it, all the time being very eloquent.

'I would tell you as soon without this money,' said she, 'for I am not forbidden. She is gone to some friend's house in the neighbourhood of Musselburgh, or down by the seaside some way thereabouts. I think the lady's name is Mrs Bridgewater; and Miss Miller is not expected back till next week.'

I thanked her for the information, and desired her to say not a word of my visit unless Mrs Winterman should ask her particularly. She said she would not tell of her own accord; and I came away to plan what best was to be done next.

I viewed the departure of Eliza as an additional dark shade of confirmation of the resolution which she had avowed. She wanted to effect an entire separation. My spirits sank again exceedingly low, and I was almost incapable of thinking for myself. In the afternoon—it being a very slack time—Mr Liverpool called in upon me, and said, as we seemed to be all so idle, he wished I would make one of four at cards with him, for there was a wager to discuss and decide. So I agreed, glad of a chance to escape from the uncomfortable burden of my own thoughts; and with two of our neighbours we adjourned to a tavern for the purpose of killing time, playing cards, and imbibing heavy wet. Liverpool was my partner. He found me a bad one. I was never an adept at card-playing, and, absent as my mind was at this time, my playing was so bad, and my blunders so egregious and insufferable, that, after checking me sharply and repeatedly, he paused a little, and said,—

‘Man, you’re surely not well; for your playing is abominable, and you look dismally.’

I declared I was quite well.

‘Take, then, another glass of ale, and don’t look so humdrum.’ But this exhortation not proving effectual, he added, ‘No bad debts, I hope?’

‘No.’

He paused a little, and, looking rather waggish, said, ‘I’ll lay any bet there’s something wrong in a certain quarter.’

He suspected I had a serious attachment, but did not know to whom. Having struck the right chord, as I supposed he guessed from my countenance, he continued—‘Tut, man, you’re no to hang your head for that. No fear, all will come right again. When I was courting my Elle, we had three bits of tiffs; ay, and you would have sworn we would never speak again; but ere ever you wad think, I knew by the blink of her e’e that the wind was changed; and then she said I always put on such a comical face she could not but smile and laugh; so we were all right again, and better friends than before.’

Homely as this sympathy was, and totally unlike as perhaps our cases were, I did feel a little more comforted by my friend’s remarks.

I made up my mind to have an interview with Eliza, and to have a pledge from her, that, although one or two years even might be fixed upon as a season of delay or trial, still that she would recall her letter, and not say that our separation was to be lasting.

I was dressed as when I went with her to Mr Withers', but I was a changed man, different in my feelings, and cast down in my hopes. At the former period, my bearing was erect and my step jaunty; now, notwithstanding all I could think to fortify myself, I had a beating heart, and my steps were careless and unequal. The day was hot, and it was eleven o'clock ere I reached Mrs Bridgewater's house. All were gone to see the races, two miles distant; and the races began exactly at twelve; I learned further that they had their own cart, with sacks hard stuffed with straw for seats; the horse a black one, and the cart painted blue with red wheels, and that a lad in a blue jacket and Glengarry bonnet was driver. By these marks I had hope of finding them out among the crowd, and of recognising them before they could discover me. I had two miles more to walk to the ground, at which I arrived just as the race began; but by the rapid movements of the carriages, horsemen, and pedestrians, I was almost in despair of finding or obtaining a glimpse of the object of my solicitude. I believe I was reckoned a saucy fellow by many a lady on the ground that day, for staring so hard to penetrate the mystery concealed under their large summer bonnets and white veils. My scrutiny was at last successful. There was she. I saw the yellow-flowered scarf. I was sure I was right; but I durst not approach, for I was not acquainted with Mrs Bridgewater; and, besides, there was a well-dressed young gentleman on a fine black horse pacing by the side of their cart. This did not tend to make me easier. Twenty conjectures were formed in my mind in succession. Had this gentleman any acquaintance with Eliza? or was he a friend of the Bridgewaters? Had *he* by any means influenced her to write *the letter*, or leave the city so abruptly? No; I could not entertain such a supposition for one moment; yet I was uneasy concerning his pointed attention to the party—never leaving them for one moment, except when, as I supposed, he went to get some information for them as to the race, or the minor sports, which were now about to begin, and then galloping back so easily and handsomely—showing off, as it were, before Eliza, a well-made person and a pleasant face to the very best advantage. I shrank out of sight. It was not my time to appear; heated and faint with travel, and my countenance and

clothing soiled with dust. Yet I could not go without trying to excite her attention to my presence ; so I again stepped from my cover to take another look at the party. At this moment her face was towards me ; its expression was joyous and unrestrained. I think she now sees me. How anxiously she looks ! Is that a nod of recognition ? If it is, it is a very slight one. Is she not pale ? She has turned her look again to the horseman.

A general movement of the crowd now obstructed my view of them ; and, notwithstanding my efforts, I lost sight of them entirely. I wandered round and across the racecourse again and again ; and I was forced to conclude that they were fairly gone, for the company was getting thin. As I now felt very faint and parched with the extreme heat and the dust kicked up by so many feet, I went into a booth and called for some porter, of which I drank the half of a bottle ere I discovered that it was dead and flat as ditch-water, and bad otherwise ; and I felt sick and shivering. I now retired to a solitary place, and took a seat by a rivulet of tolerably clear water, in which I bathed my face, forehead, and hands repeatedly, to cool myself ; and then I mused a long while what I should do next. If I ventured to call at Mrs Bridgewater's, I might find the gentleman whom I saw squiring them in the grounds, perhaps playing the agreeable to them ; and I was conscious that I would not only be viewed as an intruder, but suffer from the contrast of personal appearance. Then a fear beset me lest they had all gone somewhere else, and that I should have no opportunity of seeing Miss Miller at all. I sauntered slowly along, depressed in spirits, and irresolute of purpose ; but by the time I reached Mrs Bridgewater's house I plucked up courage. I knocked, and asked a word of Miss Miller. She came to me at once, and shook hands in her usual way. She was, as I thought, slightly indifferent in manner ; however, she asked me to come in, and introduced me to her friends. There was no gentleman there, except Mrs Bridgewater's own son, a lad of fourteen years of age. I felt immensely relieved. The fragments of dinner were still on the table.

'Have you dined, sir ?' said Mrs Bridgewater, in a kind, polite manner.

I said, 'Yes, I have had something.'

'What ? Where ?' said Eliza.

'Oh, I had some porter and a biscuit at the ground.'

'That,' said the lady of the house, laughing, 'is nothing at all ; you

must take a little of what we have ; but I am sorry it is so much out of season.'

I thanked them—I was not much inclined to eat : ' But I will take a little water, if you please ; for that porter which I got was very bad, and I feel not quite right.'

' Are you sick, James ?' said Eliza, eagerly ; and rising up quickly, she filled a small glass of brandy, and handed it to me, saying, she was sure I would be the better of it.

Her anxiety, and the warmth of her manner, helped by that of the drop of brandy, gave a new impulse to my feelings ; and as the ecstasy of awakened hope thrilled through me, I said to myself, ' I am right ! I am right !' I took some refreshment with them, after which, as I was casting it about in my own mind how I should get an opportunity of a private interview with Eliza, the course of the conversation informed me, that previous to my appearance, it had been arranged that the junior members of the family should accompany her to a fine garden in the neighbourhood, celebrated for the earliness and excellence of its fruits.

' Will you accompany us ?'

This, coupled with a look which of itself was inviting, so pleased me, that, ' With all my heart ' came, as it were, jumping out of my mouth. Two misses and the young gentleman led the way, and we followed. Our road lay by a footpath, on one side of which was a hawthorn hedge, and on the other a field of wheat, tall in the ear, so that we were almost hid from sight. The last of the young people had disappeared over a division wall, where projecting stones on each side made the way easy, at which moment, Eliza, turning half round, presented me her hand, with a blush of sweet confusion. Oh, the relief to my saddened heart ! Never will I forget the rapture of that moment ! To live over again by recalling a joy so innocent, so natural, so unexpected, is worth years of those pleasures for which men toil even for a lifetime !

We passed on, still keeping out of ear-shot of our young companions.

' The letter, Eliza ; how could you write that letter ?'

' Oh, say nothing about it, for I have not had one hour's peace of mind since I sent it to you. When I saw you on the raceground to-day, and again when you came into Mrs Bridgewater's, looking so melancholy, so pale, and so wretched, my conscience struck me for my cruelty to you. But you must forget all this, and forgive me ; will you not ?'

Of course I did, and hastened to assure her that she had made amends.

‘And how is it, James,’ she continued, ‘that when I wrote you that letter, I was persuaded I was doing such a proper thing, both for your interest and my own; yet now I cannot see nor think of it otherwise than as an act of treachery and cruelty?’

I answered her, that her goodness of heart doubtless taught her to endeavour to please Mrs Winterman, whom long habit had led her to respect as her mother; but that now, she being absent and I present, there was that difference of circumstances which changes the very nature of things.

‘Well, then, James,’ said she, ‘I am sure I do not think I could ever do so again; but what will I do now if she comes to know that you and I have met, for I will not deny it for one moment? I fear she will be very angry; but I will live in good hope. But,’ she added, playfully, ‘you must not expect to see me soon again.’

These last words,—which might have led me, if I had been very fanciful, to think I was courting some changeful fairy, who took a delight in snatching away the hopes she had raised,—were now as nothing to me, for I had attained to my great object—a certainty that she in her heart loved me. I need here say no more of this important interview. We returned to tea; and, with a satisfied heart, I took my way homewards very leisurely in the cool of the evening, enjoying my own thoughts and musings as a species of poetry.

Three weeks passed quietly away. It would seem that Mrs Winterman had suspected nothing of our having met; for, so far as I knew, she was rather happy with Eliza. I had even the additional enjoyment of another walk of more than two hours.

CHAPTER XVII.

LOVE'S WAYS AND MEANS.

I HAD now reason to consider my love affair all straight. Next day, however, I was surprised at receiving a note from Eliza, written in rather a cold and reserved style, requesting to see me at seven o'clock

of the following morning at Mrs Winterman's, because she had been thinking over some of the sentiments uttered by me in our last conversation, and apprehended that they meant more than she had supposed at the time she heard them, and the explanation might have a considerable influence on our future conduct towards each other. I was somewhat angry, for I really began to set my friend down as somewhat unreasonable and capricious; nor had I any idea of what was the matter this once again, or how I had in any way given offence at our last meeting. I was punctual to the hour, and found her waiting me in the parlour, which was already trimmed up for the day. There was no want of the usual affectionate expression in her countenance; but she seemed agitated a little. I was very anxious for the development, and inquired what could be wrong now; for I was not sensible of anything between ourselves.

'If you will only recall our last conversation,' said she, 'you will save me the pain of stating what it is very disagreeable for me to do, or even to allude to. It was just before we parted that you made use of the expression.'

I tried to recollect what it could be; but I declared myself quite at a loss to remember anything which required explanation, or which could, in my opinion, have been calculated to give her offence. This I declared again and again to her; but still she declined informing me, until at last I almost swore that I could not think what it could be that she alluded to; and then, I added, I did not think it quite right of her to keep me in such a state of suspense, and therefore begged her to speak out at once.

She then said, 'I am very unwilling to speak on this subject, and it is much against my will that I do it; but surely, James, you cannot have forgotten that you said, speaking of the two Misses Wormitt, who are well known to have money, "they are ladies with tochers like you." Now, I am sure, James, you cannot say that I ever misled you into the belief that I had anything to expect. I have not one shilling in the world, and nothing to look for; and since it appears you have thought otherwise, it is necessary that we should at once give up seeing each other, and that our connexion may be at an end.'

I was quite confounded; I felt also like a guilty person, for I really had used the expression. I was not sure if she would have any money, or hopes of money; in fact, I never thought of the subject at all, till I had overheard some one say carelessly that she had prospects. These

words had stirred the thought, and hence the allusion which had caused such a reaction in the feelings of the woman all but pledged to me.

Conscious of my imprudence, and, I may say, rudeness, I was unable to frame a reply for some time; at length I answered, 'I am sensible now, when you point it out to me, that my language was improper, and has given you just offence; but I never meant what I so thoughtlessly said of the Misses Wormitt to be applied to you in the way you seem to take it.'

She immediately said, 'It is very good of you to say so; but I feel that the expectation you have had has altered my view of our connexion very much. I ought to have told you this sooner; and I am very sorry I did not.' She was much agitated and distressed; but she resumed, after a pause, for I was dumb, 'Yet I have, from time to time, so fully explained all my mother's history, and that she felt it even burdensome to provide me with money to pay for my clothing, that I did not consider it necessary. I only wish I had explained this a year ago; it would have saved me much pain.'

I was truly sorry to see her distressed, and angry with myself for having given her just cause; and I hastened to say, with great earnestness, 'Eliza, do you think me a man whose solemn word you can rely on?'

'Certainly.'

'Well, then, although I was never before sure that you were and would be penniless, and although I have hurt your feelings, which I deeply regret, yet I declare before God that I never once thought of such a consideration making any difference in our connexion, whichever way it might be. Do not afflict yourself about my careless speech, for I solemnly assure you, had I anticipated any such effect upon you, it would have never been spoken.'

It was a long hour before a thorough reconciliation was brought about; but it was effected at last ere I left the house. A few weeks after this, Helen visited at Mrs Winterman's, but had no opportunity of speaking to Eliza alone. She remarked to me that she was afraid there was some misunderstanding more than usual between them, for they were very cold-like to each other, and speaking very little.

My anxiety led me to visit the house at such a time, as I thought it was likely the mistress of it might be absent, or that the maid, or my friend herself, might answer the door; or, if not, that general

courtesy and politeness might secure me from affront at any rate. The maid, without answering me, showed me into a room; and, after waiting about five minutes, both the ladies came in together. No sooner were they before me than the old lady began: 'Sir, I have brought Miss Miller to you, that you may not need to hurry away, for you two must have much to consult about. In the meantime you will please to take back that crown-piece which you gave the maid. It was not very pretty conduct of you, to bribe a simple girl to deceive her mistress. Now it seems that you two have joined together in attempting to deceive me; but, I assure you, I was not blind, nor yet to be so easily hoodwinked as you thought. I have, for Miss Miller's sake, and for yours too, sir, done all in my power to prevent this connexion, which I am certain will not turn out well. I will leave you together; perhaps you may have as much good sense between you as will show you the folly of persevering. If not, Miss Miller knows my mind.' With this she left the room. I looked at my companion; she shook her head.

'Does Mrs Winterman know all?'

'Yes, James, all; for she examined and cross-examined both me and the maid so closely, that she knows everything. I have avowed also that I am under promise to you; for, since the writing of the last letter, I was determined never to waver in my truth to you again. Mrs Winterman was very angry indeed. I tried to appease her a little by saying, that although I was pledged to you, yet there was no word of *time*; and I hoped she would not say anything in public about it, for it might be years before anything took place. I added that I would be glad to assist her as usual, and would not see you except now and then, when she herself should know of it. All would not do. She cut me short by saying she would never countenance me in a step which she considered sure ruin; and told me that nothing less than a solemn promise to cut off all connexion with you would satisfy her, and if I did not make up my mind to do so within a month, that I must leave her house, and go where I pleased.'

She here paused with a sob. 'Oh, James,' she continued, 'if you knew what I have suffered at her hands these few weeks past, I am sure you would pity me; and before her young ladies, too, she takes no more notice of me than if I were not in the house! I am never called with the rest to my meals—never a cup or a cover placed for me. I must help myself to everything. If I ask any question, she

gives me no answer. If I ask her to help me to anything near her at meal-times, she never moves. Even the servant is forbidden to make my bed or clean my shoes. It is hard, very hard to bear. I did not think she could have been so cruel to any creature. But she has gone too far with me. Even the good old man is forbidden to hold any conversation with me; and her son as well. It is painful to both of them to see all this, for I know they love me very much; they both are pleased to sit, taking my hand in theirs, as often as opportunity offers, and to converse when the lass is out, who has taken her side, partly from fear, and partly by bribes of money or pieces of clothing. The old man and her son are very much afraid of her; and so are all, for she is at times very severe. She has written two long letters home to my mother; she showed me them sealed, and gave them to the maid to put into the post-office. I do not know their contents; but in her present disposition of mind, I am sure they will blacken me as much as possible, if she does not poison home altogether against me. God knows what I am to do !'

All this was very painful to me, and I was quite at a loss what to say. I regretted that I had not got my arrangements so complete as I wished, otherwise we would not have cared a fig about the threats of this bad woman; for I would with the utmost pleasure have made Eliza mistress of a house of her own; but it would be twelve months yet ere I could do this with any propriety.

'Do not speak of that, James,' said she, 'for I know well that, situated as you are, it would be very improper; and I would not for any consideration wish you to take a step so imprudent as to think of housekeeping till you can afford it. I am sure I would never forgive myself if I were to be the cause of your getting into difficulties.'

I suggested that were she to obtain lodging in some respectable family, I would gladly assist her so far as was necessary.

At this her face flushed; and she said, 'This is the consideration which hurts me most of all, that I am little better than a beggar; and sometimes I think it would have been fortunate if we had not proceeded so far, or if we had never met.' As for lodgings, she would not hear of them; she was determined to try home; it was her duty to go there; and however painful it might be made, through her friend's cruel interference, still she was resolved to try it. 'Never,' said she, 'will I be able to forget or forgive Mrs Winterman for her cruel and unnatural conduct to me. Even if she should ever relent, and use me

with her accustomed kindness, I could never live so happily with her as before.' As to the alternative proposed by Mrs Winterman, none of us ever talked of it, for we considered it to be quite out of the question; but we agreed that, since things were come to this pass, we would see each other once a week, until it should be ascertained whether Mrs Winterman was serious in her threat of expelling Eliza from her house.

We were not now put to any shift to obtain these meetings, for my friend was still treated with the same coldness and contemptuous neglect as ever; and whether she went out or stayed at home, no notice was ever taken of her. So she came to our house to tea several times, and once or twice I called upon her; during all which Mrs Winterman never once asked the result of our deliberations. But this apparent negativeness of manner was a prelude to action. About the end of the month, matters took a sudden turn. She now formally asked my friend if she was prepared to pledge herself solemnly to renounce all correspondence with me for ever; nothing else, she said, would satisfy her, after having been so deceived by us. Eliza tried to evade saying anything direct, and remained silent. This Mrs Winterman would not allow, and insisted for a direct and positive answer; but Eliza remained firm, and the consequence was a more determined persecution. From morning to night the enraged woman was never silent, nor allowed to her victim an hour's rest. Not that Eliza wanted spirit; for several times she was provoked to appeal to her reason and her feelings, and to mention her services—formerly so much valued. All was in vain. She was deaf to remonstrance; while it rather stimulated her to new activity by furnishing fresh food for her vindictive temper, and suggesting new topics for invective. Every part of my character, connexions, prospects, habits, and manners furnished food for her animadversion. My uncle's failings were a triumphant subject, and held up as a sample of what I would be. Even Helen was despised and ridiculed; and where facts were wanting, false and base assumptions were brought forward, such as only a base, malignant, and vulgar woman—avaricious beyond belief, and vindictive in proportion, where her darling measures were opposed—could have resorted to.

No doubt all this could be accounted for on very natural principles. Mrs Winterman's husband's money had been infringed upon by the failure, or rather the death, of a relation, for whom old Mr Winterman

had become bound, and he had either concealed the fact from fear of his wife, or had forgotten it. It was a sad day for him, poor old man! when the solicitor's letter arrived with a demand for five hundred pounds, which ultimately was mitigated to two hundred and fifty. She, who had always lived in a genteel and showy way, felt her income curtailed; and Charles the son's education was proving more expensive as he grew older, and likely still to increase. These considerations greatly influenced one who had married an old man for the sake of his wealth; and she could not account for Eliza refusing Mr Homespun, who was far richer and much younger. Then she had no capacity to understand the strength of that mutual love and affection which had grown up between Eliza and myself, as I may say, from our very first interview. She believed that to secure such a rich and influential friend as Mr Homespun would greatly benefit her. He had been liberal to her in presents hitherto; and there could hardly be a doubt that such a man's influence would have helped to push Charles forward either as an advocate, solicitor, or writer to the signet. I have said before she idolized wealth, and hated poverty! She never could see a fault in a wealthy person, however that wealth had been acquired; nor a virtue in a poor one, however unfortunate! I mean no insinuation against Mr Homespun, who was in reality a plain, honest man, and had no defect about him, except the coarse, broad, homely manner which he rather prided himself in. To refuse the hand of such a man, worth certainly five thousand pounds, some said ten thousand pounds, seemed to her such absolute insanity, that, in one sense, it might form some excuse for her unrelenting persecution.

I need not say that Eliza's sufferings were deeply felt by me. There were times, indeed, when they so cut me to the heart, that I felt, as a man, I was bound to put an end to them, be the consequence to myself what it might; and I proposed many and various ways. But Eliza always dissuaded me from any rash or violent course, by intimating her fixed determination to go home and face her mother, conscious that she had done nothing to be ashamed of, and she would face all bravely. Yet her internal trouble of mind, and the perpetual annoyance practised against her, had affected and altered her appearance greatly. She was thinner and paler than usual; and her fine sweet eye now wore a troubled expression. At length, one day in the midst of a fierce attack, she turned round, and looking as calmly in her

enemy's face as she could, 'Mrs Winterman,' said she, 'for God's sake forbear; leave me in quiet two or three days, until I get my clothes mended and arranged, and I will then make you quit of me.' She was daunted by this; and proved the rule of her peculiar class, viz., that all tyrants are cowards.

About the first of October, Eliza quietly packed up her trunks; I sent a porter to the house at dusk for them, and they were removed to my warehouse without any address, and covered up in the meantime. As had been agreed upon the preceding evening, I was at Mrs Winterman's back-door by half-past five o'clock next morning. Eliza's bedroom was to that side; and a lad with a gig was at the bottom of the entry. I gave two taps as agreed, and was gratified to see my friend immediately in complete travelling dress. She went in again to bring out her few ready-packed-up necessities. Meanwhile Mrs Winterman had heard the bustle, and, darting across the lobby, possessed herself of her three little packages. She then told Eliza, that unless she chose to bring me in face to face to answer for my conduct she should go without her parcels. At first I was very reluctant; but anger came to my assistance, and I marched into the family bedroom, booted and coated, with my gig-whip in my hand. Mrs Winterman had thrown on a little apparel, and was walking about the room. The old man was sitting up in the back of his bed in great apparent distress, exclaiming, 'Ow, ow, sic a mornin'! sic a mornin'!—and we liked her sae weel!' Charles also hearing loud voices, and that Miss Miller was leaving, was up, and was crying bitterly! Mrs Winterman did not detain me.

'Ah! Mr Meetwell, this is a fine termination to all my hopes! You have indeed turned out a very different man from what I expected. I never once dreamed that you would have misled and deceived me as you have done. You have ruined my peace of mind for many a day. But, sir, I have done with you; and as to you, Eliza, you may take away your things, and may God pity you!'

'I am sorry,' said I, 'to have fallen so much under your displeasure; but must take the liberty of adding, that I will not be charged with deceit where I have practised none. You know, ma'am, how many a day I came about your house, and none was made more welcome or treated with more respect. What have I done to offend you so much, and to change your opinion of me so far from what you once professed?'

'You need not pretend ignorance of my meaning, sir,' cried she. 'There,' pointing to Eliza, 'stands a girl whom I loved well once, and hoped to see settled creditably in life. You have ruined her prospects, and brought her to this. It was mean and selfish of you that! As to you, Eliza,' addressing her, 'you might have left my house in a much more honourable and comfortable way than by first stealing away your luggage, and then sneaking out by a back-door in such a way as none but those who know they are evil-doers need to do.'

'Oh! Mrs Winterman,' exclaimed Eliza with much emotion, 'your language is very trying; but as I have a clear conscience, I will be the better able to bear this. Sure I am at least, if you have any feeling in your breast, and are able to reflect on your cruel usage of me, you will yet be sorry for it. I shall not sneak off by the back-door, as if I were ashamed of myself or what I have done; but go out by your front-door, which I have a perfect right to do. Good-bye to you all;' and, suiting the action to the word, she unhooked the key, opened the front-door smartly, and issued into the street.

It was now past six o'clock; and by the time we cleared the suburbs, the first rays of the morning sun were shooting horizontally through the trees and bushes on our left. The air was rather nipping; yet, when we were comfortably settled in our seats, and all wrappers carefully adjusted, and our good steady pony running along as lightsome as a bird, notwithstanding the scene we had just left, our spirits got up finely. To one pent up much in a town or crowded city, there is something very exhilarating in the motion and novelty of a whirring drive in a gig on a good road. Every other circumstance was favourable to our enjoyment of the scene we were passing through. Here and there a few stooks of corn were yet to be seen out in the fields, and we met or passed groups of people on their way to collect their winter potatoes, with the three-toed graip for 'holing' them, and creels for gathering them up. The turnip fields showed well; their green foliage was yet untouched and in full vigour, and white, yellow, or purple globes appeared here and there peeping from under. The trees were nearly despoiled of their leafy honours; those which remained being of all colours, brown, red, yellow, and green; and the morning breeze was detaching the remaining leaves one by one, which, after balancing to and fro as they fell, found a bed on the ground amongst their brethren who had fallen before. Pleasing indeed it is to see autumn thus

crowned with abundance ; and yet there is a melancholy about her, even as there is in man, when, after he has heaped up his stores, he lies down in the dreariness of old age to prepare for death. But we were young ; our fruits were yet to be gathered ; and we drank up the sun's rays as if they had been the promises of hope.

Having stopt at an inn half-way, we drove on again ; and at a turn of the road I said, pointing forward, ' When we get to that rising ground crowned with dark firs, we'll see the steeples of ———. I dare say you are ready for a good breakfast, as well as I am.' I expected a reply, but not receiving one, and looking more closely through her veil, I could see that the abrupt annunciation of the place where we were to part being at hand, had chased the colour and animation from her face, and it did not return again. We arrived at 9.30 ; we had taken it very easy. We got a good breakfast at the inn, to which I did ample justice. Not so Eliza ; her heart was full. Her anticipations of the probable reception awaiting her at home got the ascendancy, and she was very much distressed. I did and said all I could think of to comfort her, but failed. She waived me away ; and an uncontrollable burst of weeping followed. I involuntarily groaned aloud in the agony of my mind. I tried all the arts I was master of to soothe her, and she had regained tolerable composure before the stage-coach came up which was to convey her away. I was well acquainted with the guard of the coach, and gave him a crown to see well to her comfort at every stage, and especially to recommend her to the care of the landlady where she was to stop all night. I could now do no more. Her last look ; her veil thrown up ; her face swelled with weeping, and very pale ; her eyes fixed upon me with such an affectionate expression, and she was gone ! I hastily returned to the breakfast parlour to compose my mind, and pray to God to watch over and to protect her.

One of our city lawyers got the empty seat in my gig. I had but slight acquaintance of him, but he preferred going with me to waiting two hours longer for the stage-coach. We had beef and ale at the nice half-way house, for which he paid ; and my horse, rested and fed, ran home pleasantly. The lawyer was very loquacious, and amused himself completely, and diverted me a little, notwithstanding my sadness, by his incessant talking ; and I got home about six o'clock to tea. We had been seen on the road in the morning by a neighbour coming to town, who, on his arrival, circulated the report that I was away to Gretna Green with a lady. This waggyery reached my uncle's ears

and he and Mr Winterman junior were in close confab upon this subject, when I arrived to put an end to their speculations.

Next evening the guard of the coach brought me a long letter from my friend, the perusal of which gave me great pleasure, from the affectionate and confiding style. It ran as follows :—‘ After parting from you,—and I am sure it was a parting the most bitter, I hope, I shall ever experience,—I felt rather unwell, and I was afraid I would be unable to proceed. A gentleman, seeing me so uneasy, caused the coach to be halted at a house four miles from where we started, and made me take a little wine and water. He did all he could to amuse me. I was the better of the wine, and the sickness wore off ; but was not able to enjoy his company, although he did all in his power to divert me, and I felt sorry when he left us. At the first stage I did not get out ; and now there was no one left in the coach but the old grave lady in black, who eyed you and me so hard when we were parting. She scarcely opened her lips the whole way. I tried twice to enter into conversation with her, but she was so proud and reserved that both my attempts were ineffectual ; and such silence between two females I found very uncomfortable. But to my great relief she left us next stage. I got out here, and the guard was very attentive in ordering the landlady to make me comfortable. Here I ate one of the biscuits you gave me, by the landlady’s parlour fire, for my feet were quite cold ; and she pressed a cup of tea upon me, for which she would take no payment. I was much restored by the time we started again ; and now we had very different company,—a gentleman half tipsy, a lady, a servant, and two very pert children. The road was more rough, or I thought it so, and I had a return of my headache. It was dark also, and I wearied uncommonly, for I was now very fatigued indeed. You know I have not had much experience in travelling, and this was a long and a sore day’s work for me, both body and mind ; but we arrived at last near to nine o’clock. Again your friend the guard gave me particularly in charge to the landlady, who took me into her own parlour, and produced many fine things to tempt my appetite, but a single cup of tea with toast was quite enough for me. It is now half-past eleven ; I am writing this letter to you, my dear James, because the guard goes back early to-morrow morning, and I could not think, tired as I am, of missing the opportunity of sending you news of my progress, for I know your anxious mind. I am established in a comfortable bedroom, and have got a nice bit of fire, and everything as

comfortable as I could desire. I leave this to-morrow at noon, and I think I shall reach home before it is dark. Oh, James, how alarmed I am at the thoughts of home ! it has not the sweet sound it ought to have to me. Perhaps all may turn out better than I expect ; but if Mrs Winterman has fulfilled her dark threatenings, it will be hard on me. You do not know all ; she has gone much too far in this matter. May God forgive her, as I shall try to do. Do you not think, James, that there are happier days in store for us yet ? Sometimes I think there are, but sometimes I fear. Do not forget me in your prayers, James, for I have much need of them ; and believe me, love, I will not forget you when I go to ask mercy and blessings at a Throne of Grace. You need not expect to hear from me again for eight days ; and suppose it be a fortnight do not weary, for I do not wish to write you till I have certain information to give you. Adieu for the present, and believe me, as I sign myself, most sincerely and truly yours only,

‘ ELIZA S. MILLER.’

Mrs Winterman might guess where Eliza was going, but as she had never condescended to ask, she could not be sure ; then, by taking her away in a gig, she was still kept in the dark, and to avoid any unnecessary exposure I forwarded her trunks, addressed to my friend Walter Vainman, and writing him at same time by post, enclosed new addresses. Walter had been married now some time to the ‘green lintie,’ and all accounts represented him as a prosperous and happy man, and I had kept up correspondence with him.

A fortnight elapsed. I received no tidings from my friend. I feared the worst ; and as day after day passed away, I considered it my duty to prepare my mind for it. Twenty days had elapsed, when at length the long-looked-for letter arrived. I immediately went home, and with fear and trepidation at last opened it. I cannot put my hand on this letter now, nor would I be at liberty to publish it if I could ; but my answer to it is still in existence, and from it must now chiefly be gathered the information.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLUB CHARACTERS.

So far as I can speak of Eliza's letter, she found her own mother's mind absolutely poisoned against her, so much so, that she almost refused her a hearing. I should be accused of feeling a pleasure in painting vice were I to describe the particulars; yet I cannot refrain from giving some extracts:—'Oh, Eliza, did ever I think that human nature was capable of such heartless and cruel conduct?' 'Whoever you write to in this quarter, do not, I entreat you, let them know what you have suffered; it makes me writhe with pain when I think of it.' 'Strange to tell, Mrs Winterman, accompanied by her friend Miss Wilson, was in my shop, and made some small purchases. I am glad I was not in. Curiosity had led her, I suppose; perhaps conscience had a part in the visit.' 'You will see my name mentioned as one present and taking part in the public meetings mentioned in the newspapers herewith sent. I am rising while you are suffering.'

In my second letter:—'So I did not know all—nor even the principal part—of the cruel usage you had met with *at home*. Only to be allowed to stay one night in your mother's house! It seems so incredible, that I sat over your letter with my face buried in my hands in a sort of stupor—sometimes rage and indignation at myself for my own meanness in permitting such sufferings.' 'But oh, do not abandon yourself to despair! I will do anything on earth in the compass of my power to relieve you.' 'And I will pray to God every night to keep you in your season of distress.' 'Now, my friend, I have to give you a scolding, and you know for what, because you once offended me in this way before; why will you say it had been better for me if I had never seen you?' Here followed a long enumeration of the pleasure and advantage I had derived from her acquaintance. 'Do not repeat this offence again, or else you will force me to retaliate by saying, "How much suffering you would have escaped if you had never known me!"' 'You cry over my letters, and yet your tears are refreshing.' 'How sweet is praise from the lips of those we love!'

In my third letter:—'And you are still the object of hostility, and have been betrayed by pretended friends! This cruel usage must have an end. Say to me, and say positively, what I can do in your next.'

Fourth letter :—‘ I am so glad you have found an asylum of rest and peace, although an humble one. An old pair who have seen better days, and are not yet past the age of human sympathy and usefulness, living on the fruits of their industry, eked out by the grateful allowance of their dutiful children. I was delighted when I read it; and very much pleased with the picture you drew of the ben-end allotted to you. Mind you must have a bit of fire every night. I am sure, from what I know of you, the old people will be delighted with you.’ ‘ I am glad the box with books, etc., etc., and Helen’s remembrances, came safe to your hands, with the linen and measure shirt, etc. I am delighted with the entire confidence you place in me. Never shall you have cause to repent of it; so help me.’ ‘ Describe the old people to me in your next,’ etc.

From my fifth letter :—‘ I rejoice in the prospect of your mother being reconciled to you; it must lighten your mind greatly. I dare not express my fears, but do not leave your present asylum till you think well about it. I am sorry the people you live with are not richer in mental resources, but I quite enjoyed the picture you drew of yourself reading the newspaper to them.’ ‘ It’s a long way you have to go to the post-office; sometimes the roads must be very bad; and when it is snow, it must surely puzzle you a good deal to find your way safely. In every position in which you can be placed, my mind follows you.’ I was, as I may here mention, quite uneasy about the change of tone on her mother’s part; I did not confide in it. I was also uneasy in regard to a cousin, a gentleman in business for himself, very vain of his personal appearance, who had shown her some attention. ‘ Mrs Winterman has been making court to Helen. I know what she wants; it is to get all our version of the story, that she might gratify her curiosity, and speechify about it amongst our friends.’

From my sixth letter :—‘ Deceived again, and by your own mother! Where is this to end? How restless that Mrs Winterman is! and every one does her bidding, I think, she is so dreadfully in earnest. Do not say you will have reflections on yourself as long as you live. You have no reason for this whatever; it is persecution which has unnerved you, and makes you low-spirited; but the sun will emerge again, and all will be well. If you are to think on the one side, think also on the other.’

To this I got an answer, and replied in my seventh :—‘ I thank you

repeatedly for your kind letter. I appeal to yourself, Eliza, can you not go into the presence of the Almighty and implore Him to look upon you, and to judge between you and those who afflict you? I am sure you can, for you tell me so yourself. I wish I could say something to cheer you. I will now tell you how I arrange for writing my letters to you. The moment I have finished and sent off my letter to you, I am anxious to gather materials for the next, and set apart a space in my pocket-book for jotting down all ideas and occurrences which I think it necessary to impart for your information, or that will give you pleasure. I then prepare my paper in the shop; rule it carefully, and make half-a-dozen of pens. When I arrive at home on Monday evening, Helen, who knows my way, has a fire ready in my bedroom, to which I retire as soon after as possible. I generally write the one-half that night, which occupies me till midnight. Eighty lines each night is one hundred and sixty lines in all. I finish it next night, but leave it open till Wednesday, when I re-peruse it, till I see if all is perfectly correct; then I seal and post it. I am sure we do not pay postage for nothing. Neutral persons, not actuated by such delightful and stirring emotions, would call this much ado about nothing. Let them say what they please, yet I again assert that the hours spent in this way is a happy portion of my time. I doubt not that it is equally so with you, and even more engrossing; because you are shut out from society in a great measure. Now, to conclude: you hint that I am reserved with you, that you are greatly at a loss sometimes what to think or say, and that you had another letter written but burnt it. Now, my dear friend, who is reserved but yourself? Tell me, I earnestly beg of you; for I solemnly declare I have racked my mind in every shape since I received yours, and up to this time I am totally at a loss to guess what it can be.'

From my eighth letter:—'Your affectionate and endearing letter of last week has placed your character in a more amiable point of view than any former communication. What an alarming state you must have been in, when you had packed up all my letters under the apprehension that a malady was upon you from which you might not recover! Thanks be to God, who has again raised you up to praise Him for all His goodness.' 'You enlighten my mind at once. I see the delicacy of the position in which you are placed. I will now enable you to answer all parties. The two principal obstacles to our union which existed when you left Edinburgh were these: I wished to obtain

a permanent settlement with my uncle, to get him to accept a certain sum per annum, and to renounce all other right or claim to the business or any property he may have in it. The second object I wanted was to obtain a cash account for three hundred pounds, without which I could not with so much propriety take up house and carry on my business to perfection. I think my uncle will be inclined to accept of eighty or ninety pounds a year in perpetuity for life. This once settled, and not till then, can I ask for the bank credit. The same friends are ready to be caution for me as when I asked the credit for five hundred pounds and was refused. I have little doubt the request for the smaller sum will be granted at once, for my name stands higher and is better known than it was then. I calculate myself worth about three hundred pounds as an individual; and I would fain hope I may have all arranged by the first of July, and then we can begin to ask where you would like to dwell. Under this arrangement, the interval of separation will yet be six or seven months. That time, I must in candour say, is necessary for making a comfortable arrangement. I may effect it sooner, and I feel assured it will not be later than I have said. Helen means to forward you a box per carrier on the same day I have to write you next. She will write and enclose you a letter telling you all about it. She was much moved when she heard of your illness, and said, "These sore throats are not canny. If I had been within twenty miles of her, I would soon have been at her bedside." I think I have now fulfilled my promise.'

From my tenth letter :—'The first part of your letter which I shall notice is that which assures me that my dear Eliza is, by the blessing of God, restored to perfect health. I am truly thankful.' 'I cannot find fault with the many compliments you allot me; for although the praise is such as I have hardly the shadow of a claim to, yet it is so sweet,' etc. 'In answer to your far too often repeated regrets for the difficulties I have to encounter, mind you I have been in difficulties all along. It was not you that brought them on me; and although, from the very outset of our acquaintance, I had seen all and anticipated all, yet, knowing you as I do now, I would not have shrunk from the encounter.' 'It is you, my dear friend, who have had all the burden and punishment to bear; my part has been but small.'

From my eleventh letter :—'It is a very disagreeable story which your letter contains—most grating to my feelings, and most unfortunate in its issue; and when reported to you it must have vexed and

angered you. I know that what my uncle said of you to the impertinent individual who questioned him is not his deliberate sentiments. You know that yourself, Eliza: witness the many little presents he made you, and the long and cheerful conversations you two used to hold together. He had been taken at a moment when he was out of humour, for he was easily moved either by praise or blame. It is just one more of these vindictive plots to raise mischief and annoyance, all emanating from one well-spring, one restless mind, seeking revenge where it cannot compel slavish obedience. Mr Gillies, your second cousin, has unconsciously allowed himself to be made a catspaw here to Mrs Winterman. It was on the whole, to say the least of it, both impertinent and officious. Strange indeed! who came into my shop to-day, but Mrs Winterman, accompanied by her son! and she bought some articles of small value for his use. I was as civil as one ought to be to a customer, asked for Mr Winterman, etc.; but all in a distantly polite way. I am sure she is ripe for reconciliation, but my stomach rises at the bare idea of it.' 'Looking over our correspondence last night, I find I have now thirteen of your letters, including the one you wrote and sent by the guard, when on your way south. Six months have passed away; but the harvest of our hopes will come.'

No one who has perused my narrative to this date will be prepared to learn, that during the very time I was engaged in this engrossing and often painful correspondence, I had again fallen into confirmed habits of attending the club. No part of my conduct through life sits heavier on my mind than this. There are names mentioned in these letters which bring back to my mind with the freshness of yesterday the remembrance of our revellings. I was never the originator nor the cause of these late hours. I was always ready, if opportunity offered, to be home by ten or eleven at latest; but if the jaw, or the controversy, or the singing became animated and interesting, I was carried away by mere good-nature, having no force of character to break off, especially as there was always an undetermined sum to be paid as my share of the lawing. The second year of this entanglement was perhaps worse than the first. When engaged in this correspondence with Eliza, I never once allowed any consideration to disappoint her; my letters were ever most carefully and completely written. Yet I look like a hypocrite,—I feel it; and those who read this will decide whether I was so or not by what follows. Although I was not a ringleader, nor ever was a prominent member, or in fact a regular

attendant, I well remember the frequency of our excesses. They *did* appear *so* to me, although perhaps I was singular in this; and I think the majority of the clubites reckoned it all as rare good fun. It was chiefly in the lateness of the hour where the mischief lay. There was no Forbes Mackenzie Act then. All I can say for myself is, I kept within bounds. I was never absent from my morning bathe in summer—never failed to be in my shop at the hour; but my conscience haunted me, and told me I was a sinner, and on the broad path.

I will confidently ask—Has the man who ventures, night after night, among such a set of bold boon-companions,—who goes along with them till strong drink inflame him, say two or three nights in the week,—has he any merit in stopping short merely there? No. The man who has gone that length, nine times out of ten, goes every length, and accompanies his fellows without reserve in all their licentious excesses; and that I did not do so, was owing to the causes I have previously stated. It was no merit of mine. I have to thank God for it; it was by His blessing, my constitutional timidity, my tender conscience, good principles, and cold temperament, that I fell not utterly away, as so many others did.

In order, therefore, to make my meaning clear, and the tendency of such clubs to ruin young men, I will give a concise account of some of the principal members; and towards the end of this narrative will state the result, and their progress in life.

Despot I have described already. Our best scholar; was well left; had a good business; pompous and exacting, with a very high idea of his own dignity, as exemplified in his dignified walk and oracular delivery; very sarcastic to others, but extremely thin-skinned and sensitive himself.

Impudence.—A very impudent man—naturally impudent; but he did not seem aware of it. Was left one thousand pounds, and an excellent business. A warm-hearted fellow; lavish of his money; but coarse in his language.

Withyman was the life and soul of Charlie Goode's club. Full of ready wit; an excellent tactician; his jokes and mirth rose spontaneously as it were, promoting mischief and quarrelling among the fools of the club, but having the power of allaying the affray immediately, when blows were imminent. His winks, innuendoes, and comic faces were irresistible. He also was well left, with a good business. Very warm-hearted, active, and friendly.

Scagger.—In business for himself; poor, genteel, and very tall; walked the *paré* well; dressed handsomely; very little education, and shallow of intellect; social and friendly; sat down with great gusto to his liquor; sang one good song; and frequently got 'fou.'

Softman.—Principal clerk in a large wholesale house; of a fine ruddy countenance; imperturbable good-nature; and his laugh, as well as his wit, ready on all occasions; quite inoffensive.

Leetle Dauvit.—A journeyman shopkeeper; salary about seventy pounds a year; principal salesman, and an admirable one; not exceeding five feet high; dressed exceedingly well, and was in truth a pretty creature; beautiful hair, well combed; clean, neat face, and sweet little blue eyes; warm-hearted, and truly polite, with an exhilarating laugh ready at command; was a general favourite. It was a mortal offence to call him Leetle Dauvit; and those who did so through ignorance, were compelled by the general voice to make an apology *instantly*. I liked him and Wittyman very much.

Duxie.—A master tradesman, working away without any one knowing if he was doing good or not; a square-built squat man, about five feet four, well filled up; very taciturn; imbibed his heavy wet slowly; no words; smiling to himself at times. But he was well educated; and if you taunted him, and put him in a passion, the harmony of the evening was lost, for he *would not* be quiet again; and if at any time when songs were agoing, and music was flowing, if he was urged to sing, and consented, then woe be to you if you did not listen to 'Come sit you doon, my cronies,' of thirteen verses, and the chorus to each verse,

'An' sae will we yet, an' sae will we yet;
When we fell we aye got up again,
An' sae will we yet.'

Nor would he bate one jot of the whole thirteen verses; chorus and all must be gone through, and laborious work it was for twenty minutes. None but strangers asked Duxie to sing.

Simple.—A master tradesman; poor; a simple wretch, as Despot called him; drank his drink; had 'naething to say;' laughed at the jokes of others; had the fine instinct to 'gae hame when fou.'

Shark.—A lawyer; came always late, and stayed late. He had plenty of wit for those who stayed till midnight; but at no time before that, he was so busy eating and drinking. A clever lawyer; a witty fellow; there was no match for him, if once roused, in our whole squad; but few remained to hear him.

The Architect was a companion to Shark for late hours; a man of natural talent; a fine boon-companion, from his honest bursts of broad Scotch humour; fond of shellfish. Shark and he would often get in their 'parten' each; and eat up breasts, insides, big toes, little toes, and all, ere leaving—a job of an hour at least. Shark and the Architect were often left alone. It would have been of no use to call for the Architect next day before twelve noon.

Handsome.—A vain, showy fellow; quite aware of his good looks; shallow, proud, and irritable; a shopman; had a dry, bickering laugh, ready for every joke.

Sumph.—A lad who had been brought up to country labour, but having been left one thousand pounds, thought he would turn a shop-keeper, and was in training, living on the interest of his money, which I fear did not keep him; a mere 'cake;' good-for-nothing but 'ha! ha! ha!' and sit by the fire and pull the bell; sat generally to the very last, as if he had no home.

Swell.—A fashionable draper; dressed very foppishly; a good-tempered fellow; *driving* a large business at no profit; a pleasant, polite, empty fellow; never stayed late.

The Marshal.—A pompous creature, with an artificial laugh; supplied Charlie Goode with part of his liquors; not an original idea in him; and if there was one, ten chances it was wrong.

Such were some of the principal characters of our club. There might be twice as many comers and goers, and partial attenders. The ordinary topics of conversation were theatricals; the ladies; military and naval officers; the merits and demerits of commanders; occasionally religious topics; betting on the most insignificant occasion; the Leith smacks, and their great superiority over all others, of Berwick, Dundee, and Aberdeen; the races, and horses of the by-past and ensuing season; street-walkers; last night's or last week's fun; newspaper editors; also Brougham, Jeffrey, and others; parliamentary characters, as Burdett, Lord Archibald Hamilton, Whitbread, Romilly, Lord John Russell, Melville, and Trotter; Whig and Tory disputes; cards; and sometimes quarrelling; the never-failing amusement of turning each other into ridicule,—'It's a d— lie,' being a good ringing interjection. If the individual applying it was in a passion, no further notice was taken of it, except to laugh the louder at him; but if said in a serious mood, sometimes a glass of punch thrown in his face would be the punishment, but I never saw a blow

given. I always avoided these collisions by sheering off before the storm rose to any height. I was somewhat like a stranger amongst them. I offended no one, and no one offended me.

One night it was very late, and I was quite miserable to get away. I had almost got off, when Leetle Dauvit suddenly placed his back to the door to stop me, and in endeavouring to remove him, I grasped his shirt-frill in place of his coat, and tore it till it hung down. I cried with vexation; but Dauvit was no more a warrior than myself, and did not resent it.

By-the-by, I omitted at its proper place to state that Mr Smith, merchant tailor, sometimes made one with us, but never without an invitation. He was a thin, little, genteel man, proud and sensitive; and if any one unguardedly called him Willie, or Smithy, he looked daggers at the offender; but we all knew his weakness, and called on the offender for an apology to Mr Smith, which was all that was wanted to appease the placable tailor. On being asked to go into Charlie's, he always stated that he never carried money, and we always agreed to 'frank' him. No sooner did he show face in the club-room than he was greeted: 'Oh, it's *Master* Smith; ' then aside to one another—'We'll get "Sleepy Maggy" the night.' I never heard 'Sleepy Maggy' sung as Mr Smith did. When he was asked to give it, he blushed with absolute pleasure, and said, 'Na, no on the first tumbler; ' but after he had mixed his second, off it came amidst dead silence. The earnestness, the pathos of 'Aboon my breath I daurna speak,' was amazing—so clear, so low; we were always charmed, and sometimes got an encore from him. He always left when he had finished his second tumbler.

It was a singular fascination which led me two or perhaps three nights in a week into this hot-bed and nursery of vice, for so I may fairly call it. Never a morning did I awake to consciousness, after having been late, without feeling a severe degree of self-reprobation—a determination to refrain from going back; but these resolutions never lasted above three days. There was amusement, excitement, and information there which I could get nowhere else, but alloyed with so much that was bad, that my resolution to give up was too well justified. I frequently vowed and prayed in secret that I might be enabled to give it up for ever. And when I thought of the hardships and self-denial of Eliza, and contrasted her sufferings and my indulgences, I almost loathed myself. I could not conceal from myself that I was

acting a mean and hypocritical part. It is a small matter for me to assert that I never once swerved when I had to write my letter—that I never once disappointed her during all the period of her sojourn in the south. It showed something, however, and that her influence kept me within bounds and restraint. Strange as it may appear, the sentiments expressed in my letters, and my conduct in regard to this club, were so widely at variance as to merit the charge of deceit; yet it did not so appear to me at the time, because I always fancied that it was in my own power at any time to shake off this vile bondage. I was not aware of any danger.

The blackest and worst spent day of my life was a fast-day about this same time. One of our members asked me if I would go to Fife for a sail. I hesitated, and would have rather not; but the others joined him, urging that the more in number who went the less the share of boat-fare, etc., would be. I believe I was not ill to persuade. We were in Fife by nine o'clock. Went to a celebrated tavern about a mile from our landing, had a dram, and ordered dinner at two o'clock. We took a short walk; and as the day was drizzling, and the roads uncomfortable, we sat down to cards at eleven, and played till dinner, which was not ready till three o'clock. I lost nine shillings and tenpence—indeed, I always lost at cards. We dined; drank punch—three or four tumblers was not accounted excessive in those days. My share of the dinner bill was four shillings and ninepence. We arrived on our own shore again by eight o'clock; and I accompanied the others of our company to our club-room, where I spent one shilling and sevenpence; played again at cards, and disputed, wrangled, and had more punch, till almost midnight. Adding the boat-fare to and from, three and sixpence, a total came up of nineteen shillings and eightpence, quite thrown away in one day.

I was literally horror-struck as I awoke to consciousness next morning, and remembered how I had spent the preceding day. I felt almost choked with remorse. Helen gave me a pretty sharp touch too; for, with a bitterness she did not commonly use, she said, 'I think you keepit the fast-day!' I was just about to begin to shave myself, when I fell into a musing mood. Is this me? Did I really spend the fast-day thus? I am surely far gone indeed. Never will I forget the anguish of that quarter of an hour; I knew I ought not, and never did.

Although scoffing at religion was not frequent at the club, yet it rather was the habit. Simple had been a whole week absent; and

when he again made his appearance he chanced to mention that he had joined the church the week before, and it was reckoned rather a good joke. Simple did not feel at all offended, for he was truly a simple creature. I have observed that scoffing at religion may not proceed from any design of undermining its authority; only from looseness and levity of manners, with a desire to be thought knowing; yet the effect may be equally pernicious with weak minds, if it make them ashamed of avowing in a modest and firm tone that religion holds a sacred place in their hearts and in their practice. Indeed, I would say that any one who is frequently in such company as I have described our club to consist of, had need to pause. He is in great danger of becoming a drunkard—a fact which I may prove by instances before I am done. It renders, too, those who give way to such habits rather unfit for domestic life; not only eating up the spare time which, if spent in mutual improvement and reading or conversation, makes conjugal life so very pleasant and so very safe, but also destroying the capacity for domesticity. Some may here throw aside this narrative with contempt, and say, What! no society? no club? no animating conviviality? no exchange of thoughts? no sharpening of wit? no 'feast of reason and flow of soul?' Well, I must confess it is somewhat difficult to answer this; and the want must be supplied in some way or other. The news-room is an excellent opportunity when the news of the day require to be reviewed. The friendly walk gives good occasion for the interchange of thought. The public parks; the esplanades; the society of neighbours, free and easy, yet not obtrusive; all these, and others that can well be imagined, and everything, almost anything but tavern drinking clubs, which chiefly excel in loose jaw and unbridled license, and create a craving for 'high jinks,' which is exclusive of all sober enjoyment, let alone improvement. Nor am I much in favour of debating clubs, which turn out ready-made speakers. Speech-making people are not generally acceptable. When we see a man in private society gathering himself up as if for an oration, we nerve ourselves as if to bear an infliction; and I never knew an example where controversy ended in conviction. Yet talking to the crack of doom is better than drinking. The evils inflicted on society by drinking habits are not, I suspect, so obvious as we might carelessly suppose; for the victims, having lost caste, are removed to other parts of the world, or disappear in the oblivion of death. As for example:—An extensive merchant has a confidential clerk, who also is his

cash-keeper ; he leans upon him with entire confidence, and unbends freely in his company, confident that he is safe, looking upon him as a son or a brother. He gives Mr Rightman a very handsome salary ; and he quotes what he says and what he writes. He asks him frequently to his house, and treats him with marked respect ; in short, he considers himself fortunate in having such a one to relieve him safely of the drudgery of business. One day he has Mr Talkative to dinner, an old chum of his, and the two have opened their hearts and loosened their tongues. Talkative is a bachelor, and leads a bachelor life ; he was dining at Auburn House last Monday ; enjoyed himself very much ; stayed rather late, then walked home the mile by moonlight—it was beautiful and clear. When nearly opposite the ‘Lion,’ a party issued out of it very elevated and very merry—so much so that they could not refrain from the chorus of ‘An’ sae will we yet.’ ‘Do you know I thought one of them was your Mr Rightman ?’ ‘Eh, you must, I think, have been mistaken. Wasn’t you a little muzzy yourself ?’ ‘Oh ! of course I was ; but I think I know Rightman, his voice, his amber-coloured vest, black neck-tie, light trousers ; and does he not just cock his hat a very little ?’ ‘Well, he does ; and you think it was he ?’ ‘As sure of it as I can be of anything by moonlight.’ The arrow has sped ; suspicion is awakened ; and by questions here and there, prompted by his nervous fear, he finds Mr Rightman has his faults ; and who has not ? Rightman has done nothing out of the common way ; but he feels a chill has come over the governor’s manner. The second clerk is spoken to more frequently. Rightman gets no increase of salary ; he asks a reason ; he gets none ; and in a fit of vexation throws up his place, and becomes a loose fish.

If the clubman is a shopkeeper or a master tradesman, the knowledge that he keeps such company will injure his credit. But this is not all : these habits swallow up a good deal of money. If they were candidly to confess all the cost they lead to, they would estimate the loss at not less than fifty pounds per annum ; and, for my own part, who perhaps transgressed not more than a hundred nights a year, I could state it at not less than twenty pounds. I always lost at cards, and very often paid more than my share of the reckoning. But even this is not all. The tendency of evenings spent in the tavern is restlessness next day ; a desire to escape from the workshop or saleshop, and get out into the open air to saunter idly about, disregarding the weighty consideration that these are the valuable hours of business. He ought

to be in his place if he has any wish to thrive; and, if he is not, others will reap the benefit. Speaking for myself again, there is a lassitude over one after 'an evening,' as the saying is—a disinclination for business. Many must have felt that when they had gone to deal with a man whom they expected to be eager and thankful for it, they have found, in place of that, a man provokingly cool and careless. The business was accordingly only half done, and some one else got the other half who was more keen.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MARRIAGE.

My habit of frequenting the club continued to hold me in chains till far on in the ensuing spring. I can easily recall the time, and the attendant circumstances, when, by the blessing of God, I was in a great degree emancipated from this most dangerous slavery. My compunctions, my remorse for having fallen under the dominion of such a vile habit, preyed upon my mind continually. I was very unhappy, and felt a great degree of humiliation; and these feelings grew stronger within me, in place of becoming weaker from repetition; and the thought that my marriage with Eliza was to a certainty approaching, rendered the burden of my self-reproach smarting and insufferable.

It was now light at shop-shut, after which I had to pass along by a corner where the members of the club used to walk about until two or three of their number got together, and then walked off to Charlie's. I had several evenings passed them unobserved: they at last noticed this; and one would cry 'Ahem; ' another would make a bow; a third, 'I say, James, I want to speak with you,' and then getting within arm's length, would seize me by the coat, telling me, 'If you are really meaning to cut us, come at all events and give us your good-bye.' I never had courage, after being once hailed, to break away again, but followed passively as if I had no self-will of my own. But I became again so unhappy at the idea of what Eliza would think of me were she to learn how I spent so many of my evenings, that I resolved

positively to forsake their company entirely ; and although it was nearly a mile to go round by such a way as effectually to shun them, I did so for nearly two months, until I was fairly emancipated. I was convinced I did not possess the necessary fortitude to resist the temptation openly ; I therefore sneaked away from it. The cowardice was bravery, and I thank God who assisted me. From this period my life was a new manner of being—a kind of moral new birth.

I had been on a visit to Glasgow, which I enjoyed very much indeed. All my old friends gave me such a cordial welcome as quite exhilarated me. How pleasant this is ! but to those only who have experienced it in its full extent as I did. I felt surprise at the joy, the mutual joy, it gave us to meet again. The Daintys, the Franks, Messrs Bluff and Symmetry ; my musical tailor, Mr Steadyman, and Mr and Mrs Hielandman. Every hour of that visit was pleasure. I had lately emerged from the dark thralldom of the club, and the world seemed as if fresh and new to me. I had a little business to do, about as much as paid my expenses. I was eight full days in Glasgow. It was too long to be from home, perhaps unwarrantable ; but my uncle was now very attentive, and my apprentice a very promising lad. I purchased a few presents, chiefly for Eliza, and returned home in the best of spirits. I observed that Messrs Bluff and Symmetry were very hearty with the bottle, and took their punch with great gusto. Both were partners with Mr Crafty now, but the firm remained the same. Both were making or saving money fast.

Having now committed to record an impartial history of my conduct during the memorable season when, in absence from Edinburgh, my dear friend had been suffering so much, I resume again, with more hopeful feelings, the extracts from my letters. From letter thirteen : — ‘ Miracles, it seems, are still happening ; and I consider the change of Mrs Winterman’s conduct to you, from hostility and persecution to offers of friendship, reconciliation, and good offices, as one of the most miraculous. I rejoice most heartily at this change ; but chiefly on your own account, because you say it has restored you again to entire peace of mind. Yet when I think how frequently of late her conduct towards you has been capricious and unaccountable, I would even yet be afraid to lean too heavily to it, lest we should again feel the pain of having been deceived. Do not be angry at me for this my opinion. I sincerely wish I may be mistaken, yet I fear, and would be exceedingly sorry to see you again betrayed by hollow professions. Do not

neglect to write her, as she lays so much stress upon it, and be sure to fulfil all points of civility, but do not confide in her. If you please, we will pause a little first; at all events we will avoid the extreme folly of trying to please everybody. There is not a single objection of weight can be urged against our marriage, but that I am not sufficiently rich. If this reason were to be a bar to marriage, how few marriages would take place! People get rich after marriage as well as before it, which I hope will be the way with us.'

From letter eighteen :—'The time has now arrived which I have all along so confidently anticipated for you, when, from a proud eminence, and looking like yourself, and supported by highly respectable friends, you are enabled to refute every calumny, and triumph over all your foes. Your mother and her husband, and all who have inflicted pain upon you, must feel sadly ashamed and mortified when they know that you have been an honoured visitor for a week at a time, first in one mansion and then in another, of the best families of the district. I am sure, Eliza, you will join with me in thanking the Author of all good for this happy change.' 'In perusing your welcome letter of last week, I was not a little sorry to observe a sad, subdued, melancholy tone pervade the whole of it. My dearest friend, I am not surprised at this, but I could wish it were otherwise; and yet I do believe I am not aware of the one half of what you have suffered. It brings tears into my eyes when you speak so sadly of the effect of Mrs Winterman's unkindness to you, as if it had hurt you beyond the power of time or circumstances to heal. I have one piece of good news to give you in this letter. My endeavours to obtain a bank credit have now been successful. The sum is three hundred pounds, and the securities the same as I named formerly to you. You know them.' 'I recollect you once said you did not think I had a correct idea of what it would take to furnish a house. I have studied it a good deal of late: from the connexion I have with tradesmen and shopkeepers in the way of house-furnishing, I hope to do it in the way of barter, whereby it may be the means of improving my trade.' 'Mrs Rosslee deserves my best thanks for forbidding you your solitary walks, because they made you so sad and gloomy.' 'By your description of Mrs Rosslee, you have acquired in her a most judicious and valuable friend.'

From letter nineteen :—'The whole of this letter will show you that I am in good spirits, on account of every part of my business arrangements turning out so favourably.'

From letter twenty:—‘A house suitable to our wishes in all respects I find is not easily to be had. In my next I trust to be able to name and describe two or three for your selection; but you know it is only empty houses we can get a choice of at this time of the year. As soon as we have fixed this point, I will, as you have arranged it, call on Mrs Winterman (what a change!) to look out and assist me in those articles of furniture which lie most to the female hand, and of which I know but very little. I am glad you are to be accompanied to — by Miss Rosslee. I can trust entirely to your taste in choosing your dresses, knowing that you dislike anything gaudy as much as I do.’ ‘Be sure you speak out your mind in every respect in regard to every arrangement you wish made, and every friend you wish consulted or invited; for I am sure that with me you will like to give none offence by neglect, and to please everybody. Yet it would not be agreeable to either of us to have racket or ostentation, and I am a little afraid of Mrs Winterman in this respect; but I am pretty sure I shall be able to manage her, for she is very humble now, and on her good behaviour. Will you join with me in praying to God that we may soon meet under the most propitious circumstances, and that we may ever be happy in each other, and in the consciousness of the divine favour and protection.’

From letter twenty-one:—‘Your long and agreeable letter has afforded me the greatest pleasure; your whole heart seems painted in it, ever tender and true.’ ‘I have now fixed upon two houses.’ Description follows. ‘What a comfort and a blessing Heaven has given you in your new friends, Mr and Mrs Friendly! I enjoyed the description you gave of this venerable couple very much,—the routine of their life so old-fashioned, so reverend, so trustful in God, and yet so placidly happy; their garden, their domestic servants and animals, etc., form a whole picture sweet to contemplate. You must have enjoyed your week with them very much; it seems such an asylum of rest for a weary mind like yours, after such a long, long and painful struggle. It gives me pleasure to think that we will yet be able to convince them that we were deeply sensible of their goodness, and you may turn it over in your own mind how it can best be done.’

From letter twenty-two:—‘I have seen Mrs Winterman frequently of late, and we seem to be on the best of terms, at which, I dare say, both of us are sometimes a little surprised. I consult her about everything, and find her advice very useful. She makes no remarks upon

you; and any time she names you it is with much apparent goodwill towards you: indeed, I know not what to think, for I cannot give credit to the entire reality of the present appearances. Pray excuse this little escapade.' 'But I am for no more of your short letters; I was much disappointed when I opened your last. You must write me a long letter; give me every information you can about all your new and valuable friends, that I may be well acquainted with them before I meet them.' 'I am in a perfect whirl of preparation—kept flying about for ever; and how lightsome is the employment!'

From letter twenty-three:—'On receiving yours and that of the Rev. W. Faithful at one time, I did not know what to think. I was afraid something unpleasant had happened; but, on perusing them, all my fears were agreeably dissipated. He has given me such pointed and clear instructions for my direction in my journey south, till we sight the "Manse of Artoshlie," a quarter of a mile only off the coach-road, that I cannot mistake them. Of you he says, "I have of late had various conversations with your dear friend Miss Miller; and from these, and from all her other friends, I have heard such corroborating accounts, that I, who have been long accustomed to read and judge character, can have no hesitation in saying that she is every way worthy of your tenderest regard and affection."' 'Old Mr Winterman is poorly. Your friend Miss Withers was in the house last week, and shook hands with the old man. She observed him fall a-crying, and asked him kindly how it was. "Oh, you mind me so much of Eliza, and I'm feared I'll never see her again."' 'It is very kind of Mr Faithful to say we shall have the best room of his manse decked out with abundance of flowers for our marriage: solemn word! and my heart swells as I use it. While I was casting about in my mind how I could reward them for their considerate kindness, the thought occurred to me: "Reward such men as Mr Friendly and Mr Faithful! they are rewarded already; the conviction they feel in the approbation of their own heart is reward enough, that they have done a good action." They have been long habituated to this course of conduct and train of thought; yet the expression of our gratitude is no more than their due, and it would pain them if they thought we were unworthy and ungrateful. Farewell, then, till we meet in the "Manse of Artoshlie."'

I may now explain Eliza's position. From the extracts beginning at letter fourteenth to the end, it appears that with the approach of

spring happier days dawned upon my friend, and that by the time summer wore over, she was an honoured and welcome guest in the houses of the best families of the district. Not having received any encouragement from her mother or her husband to take a place with them in their church, and fearful, if she ventured there, that something might take place which would draw the eyes of the congregation upon her, she resolved not to go to that church at all, but availed herself of that next nearest, although not in that parish in which she lived. But even here she was sometimes at a loss, not having a female friend that she could get to accompany her. At last she got a cousin persuaded with difficulty to go the first Sabbath. Their visit had appeared to be one of curiosity at first; but as no one accompanied her the second time, she felt painfully conscious of exciting more attention than was pleasant, and did not return for two Sundays, the weather being very unfavourable, and the distance two and a half miles. She contented herself with a sermon out of Blair—then in fashion—of whose works she had a volume with her; and she expressed herself much soothed by one in particular: ‘Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.’ Upon her next visit to the church, the senior elder, Mr Friendly, accosted her, and said that as he saw she was a stranger among them, she would always be welcome to a seat in his pew beside his guidwife, who, he said, had prompted him to this act of courtesy. She continued to avail herself of this invitation when the weather permitted her to go so far, and warmed gradually towards cordiality with those worthy people. At last Mrs Friendly asked if she could not come and spend a day with her. Eliza declined this, being ill at ease in her mind at the time, and in hopes of a thorough reconciliation with her mother; but did so with many expressions of regret. Her hopes of a reconciliation with her mother having ended in the bitterest disappointment, she accepted Mrs Friendly’s invitation about a month after, and was so much won upon by the old lady’s kindness and motherly-like sympathy and offers of service in any way that she could be useful, that her heart was touched, and she could not withhold her confidence from her. She told her all about her relations,—how they wanted her to marry Mr Homespun, a very rich man; how she did not love Mr Homespun; how she had loved me for many years, and all the rest of her strange story. After this they saw each other often.

On Eliza’s second visit to Mr Friendly’s, she got acquainted with

Miss Meek, the schoolmaster's sister, a maiden lady of somewhere about fifty-five years. The master himself, as he was called, was about the same age. Alexander Meek was bred to the church; and if piety, learning, and devotedness to do good to his fellow-creatures had had their due reward, he would have got 'a living,' and would not have remained only a dominie till now. There was a quaintness about his manner, even in youth, which he never could get rid of. He had been twenty-five years parish schoolmaster and session-clerk. The district was but thinly peopled; yet his fees in all quite satisfied all their wants.

Miss Meek informed Eliza that she had heard the whole of her story; that her friends were severely blamed, and a considerable interest excited in her behalf; but that no one liked to interfere between such near relations. And she further said that Mrs Rosslee, widow of one of the heritors, had seen Eliza at church, was deeply interested in her, and wished to be introduced to her if possible, but feared to give offence. Many other things Miss Meek stated so grateful to the heart of Eliza, that as she went home she felt it necessary to wipe away the warm tears of joy at the sympathy awarded to her.

Next time Eliza was at Mr Meek's, Mrs Rosslee was there by appointment, and they got all nicely acquainted. Mrs Rosslee was proud and dignified as became her place, and she was also of family. She espoused Eliza's cause with such hearty zeal as left her nothing to wish, and invited her over to Langlands. Seeing that Mrs Rosslee was quite in earnest in her invitation, Eliza consented to spend a week with her, and she went; but she did not like the formal style, the plate out every day, the wine to dinner, the footman in waiting. Not that she could not enjoy the company very much—because she felt herself quite a match in conversation for all of them—but then she felt it was not her place in society, and quite refused the offer of living there, although she went frequently back for a day, or sometimes two. Eliza accompanied her once to church in her coach; but she was no sooner in it than she felt she had done very wrong in thus exciting observation and creating envy. However, in one respect it was a great consolation and a victory to her; for she was sure her mother and other persecuting friends would now feel that their mouths were stopped, and their influence at an end.

She had two or three several times been at the manse. The Rev. W. Faithful was all his name promised—a high evangelical and earnest

man. He had had several earnest conversations with Eliza, and took a deep interest in her affairs ; but there was a want of cordiality on the part of his wife and almost grown-up daughters. She was a shallow, vain woman, and having heard the *enemy's* version of Eliza's tale, nothing would shake her prejudice : reason and proof were lost upon her. She could not and did not oppose the minister ; but she could shake her head, throw out suspicions where she had an opportunity, even while she could not give one word to qualify her insinuation. Eliza saw and felt this, and never went but when asked ; and it was always when there was a party, including Mrs Rosslee, Mr Friendly, Mr Meek, etc. With these latter two families, she who had spent a winter of darkness and sorrow, now enjoyed peace, calmness, and happiness.

Her confident relation who meant to patronize her with his love,—he who caused a person to speak to my uncle, and thereby gave Eliza a painful mind—did not find himself of quite so much importance as he expected ; and finding she was absent, first at one respectable house and then at another, concluded he was not wanted, and left off paying any more visits. But had I known of another rival, as I did not till afterwards, I would have been more uneasy. This was the young handsome doctor of the district—quite a model man as he was called, riding his rounds gracefully on horseback. He rather thought it a fair field, and came forward heartily. None of your shilly-shally wooers ; he proposed marriage at once ; urged it on with all the ardour of one who has no doubt of his success, although he finds himself opposed by obstacles which he might feel, since he could not eventually overcome ; and he continued his attentions until he was assured by the minister that all was arranged for our wedding. He then left her with good wishes, for he was a nice fellow. Now Eliza had a fine opportunity of triumphing over Mrs Winterman and her mother, and their party, and also of giving me the alarm by the doctor's rivalry ; but she had suffered so much that she enjoyed the peace and honour she now basked in with thankfulness, and feared to disturb it or rouse angry passions. The progress she had made in acquiring the kind regard of so many worthy people, verifies a remark I formerly made of her, that she possessed the gift of warmly attaching as friends, all, either old or young, who happened to be in the same society with her.

Coming back to home, the dwelling-house I had fixed upon was twenty-two pounds of yearly rent, in an airy situation, the upper part of a three-storey building, of which the first floor was a shop, the second

floor occupied by a rather elderly couple, of homely, friendly manners, and the upper flat was ours. A fine, well-lighted, clean turnpike stone stair, and a rather spacious well-lighted lobby, gave a favourable impression of it at first. Even now, as I look back to it, it was genteel, comfortable, and convenient, and the view from the windows quite cheerful. I like to think of it still.

Meanwhile, as I have hinted, a sort of reconciliation had been patched up between Mrs Winterman and myself. It was not sincere on either side, I believe: I am sure it was not so on mine; and she would no doubt perceive my state of mind, for I never could counterfeit liking when I did not feel it. But she could not think of allowing such an important event to be conducted without her management. She prided herself on her management. She was a very fussy manager; so we both wrought away on the present occasion pretty well. From the hour I had settled for the house, I was quite in a whirl of business. It required cleaning and painting, and I found three or four visits a day necessary to keep painters and scrubbers at work, and be sure that all was rightly done; then to the cabinet and upholstery warehouse, to see that sofa, tables, chairs, and curtains were progressing; afterwards with Mrs Winterman at least a dozen of times a-shopping to look at curtains, carpets, blankets, glass, china, crockery, knives and forks, trays, and silver tea-spoons. Then there was a servant to engage. Next a stock of groceries, some wine, whisky, etc., was to be laid in. We had to walk a hundred times from room to room to see that everything was complete and in its place. Before all this was effected, I was out of pocket a considerable sum; indeed more than I expected, although I paid no ready-money where I could get credit; and as I had plenty of that, and the parties generally willing to take barter from me, I perhaps spent fifty pounds more than I would have done if cash had been paid for all. Mrs Winterman, with all her management, seemed to land me always in the purchase of the dearest articles. She had a great flow of logic to prove that the best was always the best, and the cheapest, too, in the long-run. It was quite true if I had had plenty of money; and as I could never name this 'consideration,' it seemed to me to be quite endless the catalogue she brought forward day after day of this want and the other want, which I could not deny. My patience almost gave way; and Eliza's remark, that she feared I was not quite aware how much was required to commence housekeeping, came home with force to me now; and I was obliged to own to myself that my estimate

of one hundred and fifty pounds in all would be almost doubled ere all was over complete. 'We must be neighbour-like,' is the all-prevailing cry with inexperienced people. I was a slave to it myself; and whenever I started any objection to any expense proposed by Mrs Winterman, she stopped my mouth with it.

Although I seem thus to lay the blame of furnishing too expensively on Mrs Winterman, I must, in candour, say I had my full share of it, especially in cabinet furniture, for which I was flattered as having a fine taste. I would not have my plans curtailed in this department; so when it came to Mrs Winterman's turn in carpets, curtains, china, etc., in the ladies' department, I could not with any good grace refuse her as Eliza's representative. If I was determined to have my way in one line, she was equally so in hers, when she brought forward her list of indispensables. It was, indeed, a great mistake in me not to have called in the assistance of some experienced friend, who would have gone over the whole requirements of such a house-furnishing; and when we saw the sum-total, and that it exceeded our means, it ought to have been cut down remorselessly. We could have saved ourselves a great many pounds if we had not furnished our best bedroom, or, as it was called, the stranger's bedroom, for which we had no real use. If people so situated had only the courage to battle the old saying of being neighbour-like! We know our own circumstances best. Why should we have a stranger's bedroom? Surely there are plenty of inns and beds to be got in a town. All along I felt soothed in this (for me) extravagance, by the consideration how much Eliza would be pleased and gratified by finding everything so much better than she expected.

The day fixed upon came round at last; the session-clerk was visited, fees paid, proclamation made both at home and in the parish where Eliza's domicile was. The gold ring was bought; my wardrobe all in the best order; and I set out for the manse of Artoshlie. I had a sufficiency of cash in my pocket to cover all expenses. I went with the stage-coach—the same long road by which I conveyed Eliza away; and I stopped at the same inn, made memorable to us by her sorrow. It was a year since then, all except about twenty days, and a memorable year to me. The landlady remembered me quite well, and inquired after my then partner, and we had some rather agreeable conversation. The coach I went by took me no farther on my road, and I had to wait almost twenty-four hours for another coach, which

would take me within a quarter of a mile of my destination. There was not a soul in this place I knew; yet I did not weary, for I had my pleasing reveries of an hour's duration at a time, passing in review all the events of the year. I had a newspaper by me only one week old, yet I could not fix my attention upon it. I had booked myself for to-morrow's coach; but I was liable to be out of a seat if the coach came up full, or if any one wanted to go a longer distance than myself he would be preferred.

I was up early, and had a fine walk in the middle of the harvest, amid stooks, and carts loading, and shearers all in motion. The late clover fields sent forth a delicious smell, as the morning sun licked up the dew of the preceding night.

The joyous chorus of spring birds was over, and those who now officiated did it in a single and solitary manner. But I was happy!

I breakfasted satisfactorily, then shaved and washed carefully; rigged myself in my wedding suit, and, for fear of dust or rain, had a loose top-coat over all. I was now ready for the stage-coach, and I waited, and better than waited, as the saying is; what a long forenoon it was! The hour came, but no coach. I was sure something must have happened; and I was thinking how unwilling the landlord would be to give me a post-chaise and take his horses out of the harvest-field, for he had some sixty acres of land which he farmed, and this was a very busy day with him taking in his corn. The coach was now half an hour behind time, when round the corner she came with a graceful sweep,—a glad sight to me, for she was almost empty. I took some little dinner with the coach passengers, and then away we went jogging on so slowly as I thought never stage-coach ran before. I looked my watch every few minutes. I had told the guard where I wished to be put off, and he said he perfectly understood the place, but I was afraid he did not. The hour appointed was now come, and still the guard spoke not; at last I spoke out of the window to him. 'Three miles yet,' was the answer, and I was out of all patience, when at forty minutes past the hour I caught a glimpse of two gentlemen coming down the cross-road, and I was at my journey's end. It was indeed the minister himself and Mr Meek. I felt honoured; I did indeed. A maid came up hastily to take my luggage. I requested to be put into a bedroom, where I washed my hands and face and brushed up my hair. I pulled the bell, and was ushered into a little parlour where

Eliza was alone. There was a bright blush covering her face, but it quickly passed away again.

She was considerably thinner, but her colour was clearer, and her countenance more animated and healthy than when she left; but withal it was a little harder in the outline of the cheek, and I feel reluctant to say that I was slightly disappointed. My imagination had misled me, and there was nothing more than a comely young lady-like person before me. I hope she did not divine my thoughts, but she jarred them a little when she said, 'What use had you for bringing that walking-stick with you?' I felt annoyed, for I could not give any reason, and I felt it was absurd. The fact was, the junior clergyman, who was to be my best man, had said in her hearing, 'Oh, there they come all right, and your bridegroom has a good stout walking-stick with him to let you see he means to keep you in order.' In five minutes we declared ourselves ready to go into the best room, gay with the best flowers and the best people of the parish. I was slightly embarrassed, till, catching Eliza's easy dignified manner, I did my best to become easy and agreeable. The minister, his wife, and four daughters; Mrs Rosslee, and another lady friend of hers; Mr and Mrs Friendly; Mr and Miss Meek; the junior clergyman, ourselves, the servants, and juveniles,—about twenty in all. The ceremony proceeded to an end without any interruption; after which a long time was spent in congratulations, presentation of gloves, which I had with me, drinking of healths, and so forth. Then tea, and plenty of light, pleasant conversation. Mrs Rosslee paid much attention to me, and I to her; she was of a very full habit, and had rings, brooches, and chains in abundance. I tried to create a favourable impression on her mind, and I think I succeeded; indeed, I learnt so afterwards. Just as the sun was setting we left the manse, accompanied by the good wishes of all, for Mr Meek's house, where it was arranged we should sup and stay. Our company was now reduced one-half, Mrs Rosslee still forming one; and we got into a vein of good-humour, in which Mr and Miss Meek were assailed with jibes and jokes about matrimony, which fell harmless, like fun that won't analyze. All were unbent, all pleased; there was no awkward pause, no boisterous mirth; an arch and joyous expression running through the whole evening, and the house was cleared by ten o'clock. We sat silent for a little until Miss Meek had slightly arranged her house, and then Mr Meek said, 'Will you join with me in the worship of God?' Oh, how beautiful

is heart-warm, unaffected prayer from the fluent lips of an educated man !

I had a walk with Mr Meek next morning after breakfast. A fine harvest morning ; a sharp wind and a bright sun. He took pleasure in showing me all his little comforts and conveniences, his little barn and byre, walled garden, and particularly his beehives, which that season had filled up uncommonly well. It was a bare, lonely-looking place. Five trees were scattered around the house without any order—large old trees. The autumn wind of this morning made an awful sough among the branches, sweeping the leaves aloft in thousands, and scattering them to a great distance ; and yet, as Mr Meek said, these five old trees did their duty wonderfully well, broke the fury of the winds of winter, and made a fine summer shade.

The best man and best maid breakfasted with us ; and after these two were left for company to one other, Mr Meek asked us to go with him for a few minutes. As soon as we were out of earshot, he then said that as my senior, and one who had seen much in the world, he would take the liberty of giving me a few hints regarding the duties now incumbent upon me in my station of life. It did not seem that his being a bachelor incapacitated him for this ; perhaps he did the duty better from theory. At any rate, had he not possessed our entire affection, and his character been unstained, we could not have so freely borne the address, and opened the gates of our hearts to the reception of what he said.

I had now a painful subject to discuss with Mr Meek. I asked him how we should act in regard to Eliza's mother ; for my sense of duty would not allow me to leave that part of the country without calling upon her accompanied by Eliza, even if we should be exposed to bitter language, or otherwise affronted. We discussed the matter thoroughly, and he stated his sentiments thus :—' I have thought a good deal on this subject, Mr Meetwell, and as I know your wife's mother to be a woman of strong passions, and I am quite satisfied in my own mind that such a step as you propose would aggravate the evil, I say, Do not go ; leave it to time. A reconciliation may be afterwards effected, but not now. Besides, such an interview might be borne by you without its hurting your feelings or peace of mind ; but I confess, if I were in your place, I would not risk my wife's happiness, on whom, I am sure, any painful language could have a serious effect. She has already bumbled herself to her mother without producing any good result.

I do not think either she or you are called upon to do more at present.'

I gladly acquiesced in his opinion, for I greatly feared the interview; and he was a much more competent judge than either Eliza or I could be of the circumstances.

At noon we parted from our dear and worthy friends, to whom our hearts remained knit for life. The sorrow was deep and unaffected on both sides; but under such happy circumstances as forbade anything like grief. On the contrary, we agreed to correspond with each other as long as we lived, and this promise was carefully fulfilled.

We had a loan of the minister's gig, and took our way to Mrs Ross-lee's house, where we were to dine. Before dinner we sauntered about in the garden of Langlands house, abounding with choice fruits, for she kept a gardener all the year round. Eliza had had access to it at all times, and the fruits had been frequently sent her when there was an opportunity, also to Mr Meek and the minister. The company at dinner consisted all of friends already named, and one or two more genteel but rather aged people. Our hostess took the lead in all the lady-like easy dignity of her character; noticing every one in turn, and making such appropriate remarks as showed the cultivated politeness of her training and habit.

Having to travel eight miles farther, and the minister's pony not being a speedy one, we bade an early heartfelt adieu to our friends at Langlands mansion, deeply grateful to them all. And I think I am not mistaken when I say, no one of us all enjoyed this time more than Mrs Rosslee herself; for besides the pleasure of doing a good action, she had such an opportunity of exercising and enjoying the sweet luxury of her patronizing talents, as rarely fell to her lot in that part of the country. Every one said she was proud, and no one sought to deny it; but it was pride not maintained by the sacrifice of the humanities, so far as we ever heard, and therefore a just one. I could wish our great folk had all in them a little of the pride of humility, for it helps to keep up the decorum and tone of good society.

It was dark almost when we arrived at the town where we had bespoke accommodation. Walter Vainman was to meet us at breakfast on the following morning, and was to bring a conveyance to carry us to his own place; not that it took us nearer home, but only to give occasion to a friendly visit, being, indeed, part of the programme of our marriage-jaunt. The minister's man had walked on before us, and,

having got something to eat and drink, and a note of thanks to his master, and half-a-crown to himself, went on his way rejoicing. We were thus now quite alone, and free from those dear and excellent friends who had so kindly taken up Eliza in the day of her distress, and whose remembrance is one of the green spots on memory's waste, cherished by me to this very hour.

We made a call upon a lady to whom Eliza was slightly related, and she insisted on making a second tea for us. All the country knew of our marriage; for it was published next morning after it had taken place in the Edinburgh and Dumfries papers, in obedience to that feeling of importance by which every one in their own eyes is inspired at such a time. To our surprise, Walter had arrived in our absence, and he was out of all patience, having waited an hour. He insisted on being introduced to Eliza immediately; and I had no objections, for she looked so uncommonly well in her light gray cloth riding-habit. She meant to have finished a letter to her mother, and posted it that night; but phoo! Walter had not come to meet us for such tame proceedings as these. He just gave her a little time to change her dress, and then, in his usual bombastic style, talked and talked with such a self-satisfied and triumphant tone as was quite amusing, even if it was a little annoying. He was desperately hungry, too, which brought us in for supper for three, although we had not intended it. Two days of feasting leaves a lassitude. But it was Walter's turn now, and he ate and drank, and talked and rattled away, and after supper made negus for Eliza and punch for himself, and told all his old stories of our days in Glasgow, of which he was always the hero. Then, as to Eliza, had I done this or that, or had I purchased a shawl for her, or a purse for her, and put gold and silver into it; and how he rated me for not knowing how to be gallant, ignorant as I was of what a bride required. I was obliged to give him it all his own way, and was too well pleased to find fault with any one.

Next morning was quiet and a little dewy. We had one cup of coffee at starting. Breakfast was ordered at the inn of the Howe, where Walter was so well acquainted, nine miles distant. What a noise he made that morning—like the launching of a seventy-four! Hostler here!—Waiter there!—I say, landlord!—orders and orders,—cloaks, shawls called for, and such a tucking in; but I was annoyed to find we must ride three in a gig. On my expressing some regret *as to this*, he explained that it was six inches wider than other gigs;

but when he, as driver, had got his seat, and Eliza was comfortably placed, there was not a seat for me. I felt quite annoyed, but tried to suppress my feelings; and putting the best face on the matter I could, notwithstanding my attitude of a half stand up, I gave the word that I was all right, and away we went. Walter was quite a Jehu in appearance; a new drab-coloured top-coat, with pearl buttons as large as a half-crown; a very flat low-crowned hat with straight rim, fastened, lest the wind should blow it off, by a broad black ribbon tied to his button-hole; a great shawl-pattern fine-wool neckerchief. He was a nonsuch, and he prided himself on being a neat whip. He did make our pony go—nine miles an hour with three passengers! Good work certainly. Yet I would not have turned corners so very smartly as he did; and if I was alarmed I kept it to myself. I was very tired of my position, shifting about every five minutes; but this was not all, for Walter had got his jawing-tackle on board, and kept up volley after volley of banter, all directed at me. 'I say, ma'am, don't you think Mr Meetwell very grave this morning? Perhaps he has forgotten that he is sitting beside his wife, eh? or do you think he is repenting the bargain? Come now, I say, James, and do not look so glum, the folks will take notice of it.' Eliza could not help laughing at his impudent nonsense, and I could not help losing my temper, and taking refuge in unbecoming taciturnity. As we came nigh the inn, he kept touching up the pony smartly with the whip right and left, again and again, till he brought him to his top pace; and when I remonstrated with him: 'Leave me alone; don't you fear; maybe I do not know what I am about;' and so he ran us through the town and up to the inn door, with a whirr sufficient to draw even more attention than he wished, checked the horse, threw the reins from him, leapt down, and gave one or two pulls at the door bell, when down came the whole house, as it were, landlord and landlady, waiter and boots. He continued to show off: ordered a fire; drilled the waiters; ordered some oddities to the breakfast, and said he would be back in fifteen minutes. The fire was burning in the breakfast parlour, and Eliza was enjoying it, for our quick driving against what wind there was had brought on a chill.

I came into the parlour, and Eliza took an earnest look at me. 'Are you well enough, James?'

'Oh yes, quite well.'

'Why are you so dull, then?'

‘Why, you see, I have foolishly got out of temper. I would not care what Walter says; everybody knows he is a vain, shallow fool; but when *you* join him in the laugh against me, I am *not able* to bear it.’

She looked amazed; but seeing the tears in my eyes, she took my hand hastily, saying, ‘Forget it, James, and I will be careful not to offend again.’

Walter, who had been making a call on two of his customers, now returned in good spirits, and we enjoyed a good breakfast deliberately. I turned the chase a little on Walter; begged him not to be so noisy, as he had almost given me a headache; asked him if his customers were not astonished at his stunning appearance, and what they said.

We sauntered about this pretty spot for two hours after breakfast, and enjoyed it very much. I told him I would not have such fast driving next stage of ten miles, and that we would take two hours to it, to let us see and enjoy the country as we went along. The wind had got up ere we started again; and when the road was straight in the teeth of it, clouds of dust kept rolling down upon us. It grew dull and cloudy; our pony also got out of spirits, and did not respond to the whip; and as we all felt uncomfortable, we resolved to come out and walk. Finding a tempting spot, we had a quarter of an hour’s quiet seat on the sward, the gig cover forming a fine seat for us. Walter had sobered down. Eliza had regained her entire self-possession, and allowed herself the full scope of her cheerful and fascinating manner; and I, now quite restored to composure, began to shine a little in my own way, by presuming to talk common sense even in female company! We had let our pony have the benefit of the rest, and he was now in fine spirits. So we mounted, and seated ourselves much as before; and although the high wind and the dust continued to annoy us, yet we came to our journey’s end for the time in the best street of Dumfries; Walter having driven us to his own shop-door in the same grand style as when we bired up to the inn of the Howe. Pulling up suddenly, out sprang two young men; while one held the horse, the other took off the luggage; and after a good thorough wash of hands and head to free us from the dust of the road, and a thorough brushing, we all were soon seated around his well-covered dinner-table. His father was there on a visit, and formed a very pleasant addition—a quiet, sensible old man. Walter’s wife we found a modest, *unassuming* creature, not the worse for having something like two thousand

pounds of a fortune. We had two young ladies besides ; and the afternoon wore pleasantly away, till, tired of feasting and of travelling, we enjoyed comparative quiet. I recovered my spirits, and continued retaliating upon Walter by telling those parts of our Glasgow experience which suited my humour, bringing in, as I think with good effect, the story of the 'green lintie.' I went into it so particularly, that Walter coloured, and said I was a shabby fellow ; and I desisted. Finding that I could spare as much time, we went out about an hour after tea and purchased a shawl for Mrs Meetwell, as I had now courage to call her, and to say the word. It was bought from Walter's brother, whose shop was right across the street, price six guineas and a half. It seemed dear at the time ; and the remains of it are somewhere about my house yet, as beautiful in colour as ever. This brother, who was a bachelor, saw us off next morning. To all appearance Walter was a prosperous man ; his shop was in good order, and had every appearance of being well conducted ; but there seemed a want of heart about it. I cannot tell well what I mean ; but you might presume as much as you liked from appearances, there was such a want of corroborating circumstances—no earnest customers, no packages coming in or going out, the goods too orderly, the young men too idle. He did not volunteer any insight into his business, except allusion to making purchases from two houses who sold very low-priced goods. I did not like it ; the cheapest goods in the market are never creditable to those who vend them.

Walter's house was large and spacious—rent twenty-four pounds, but could have brought forty pounds in Edinburgh. It was well, nay, almost elegantly furnished. Notwithstanding his shallow rudeness, he was a warm-hearted fellow : just bear with his foibles, and he was, as a friend, all you could wish. It was very attentive of both him and his wife to rise so early next morning, and give us tea ere we left. We halted for breakfast ; and a half-cousin of my own, who lived in the place, and was in business for himself as a doctor, was invited by note from me to meet us. He came ; and being of eccentric manners, it was not easy to understand what he meant ; but he found an opportunity to tell me distinctly that he thought the most of my friends would be of his opinion, that I would have been married in time enough seven years after this. Very comfortable, truly ! I was glad Eliza did not hear him. There was a little root of bitterness here. Seven years before this I had been in company with two of the doctor's

sisters; and, while joking away, the eldest said, 'But if I were to write you, would you answer me?' I said I was not very clear about that, as I thought it dangerous to correspond with young ladies sometimes (I was half engaged then). Being a beautiful writer, she took the initiative, and wrote me. I have her letter yet; I never answered it or saw her after. I was not a little surprised when Mrs Meadows, many years afterwards, asked me if it was true that I had cheated the doctor's eldest sister. I told her the circumstances, and she freely absolved me.

CHAPTER XX.

DOMESTIC ANXIETIES.

MY warm-hearted friend Liverpool was waiting us with a hackney-coach all right and ready. He was very serviceable in getting our luggage all looked out and put on the coach, and accompanied us home. There were about a dozen of friends to welcome us. The shortbread was broken with congratulations and blessings; the bridescake was cut up;—all which circumstances, jumbled together, float confusedly through my memory! But I do not wish to forget those who were present—never: Mr Liverpool and his wife, Councillor Plausible and his lady, Mrs Winterman and her son Charles, Miss Bridgewater, Miss Withers, Helen, and ourselves two. Mr Liverpool and Councillor Plausible kept the company all alive and happy. We had had travelling enough, and feasting enough, and were delighted to find ourselves at home.

What am I to say now? I am a married man, and Eliza is my wife. There is no more to be said. Courtship seems wound up to a fair and legitimate conclusion by marriage, and it may be wondered what more my vanity would prompt me to say! I answer, I am writing the history of my life and my faults; and in my own humble opinion, what is to follow is even more instructive than what has gone before. I may here remark of Councillor and Mrs Plausible, that he was a lawyer—a very clever man, a master of tact; most agreeable and insinuating in his manners, yet a most impudent and unscrupulous man, who carried all off with such an air of good imperturbable feeling

as almost disarmed you. His wife had been Eliza's most intimate friend; she was as nice a woman as you could meet—exceedingly pleasant, well-informed, and lady-like; her proportions as a woman were full and faultless; and when she walked with her arm in yours, her measured elastic step was quite delightful. She was very gay in disposition; and was a great toast in her time. It may be noticed that my uncle was not at our welcome home. I was afraid he might be in some of his outspoken moods, and charged a friend to entertain him. Three days afterwards, we gave him a call. He was not in such a pleasant humour as I could have chosen; and in a short time he began to tease us upon unpleasant subjects. Seeing how it was tending, I rose quietly, and said, with all the mildness and sorrowful sadness which I really felt: 'Uncle, this visit was well meant; we would wish to live on pleasant and friendly terms with you; but if it cannot be, better for us not to meet at all. I hope you will not be angry if we go away just now, but we will see you again soon;' and, notwithstanding some little remonstrance, we took our leave at once. This conduct proved decisive; for my uncle was sound at heart; and we heard some days afterwards that he was mourning over the occurrence, and regretting his treatment of us on our first visit. So we asked him and Helen to tea with a friend or two more—among them Mr Liverpool, whom I charged especially to entertain him. From that hour all was right between us; for, as I said formerly, he always liked Eliza, and she acquired a very great ascendancy over him. Yet it was often a heavy reflection on the part of my wife that we had no parent to bless our union; and not hearing from her mother, in answer to her letters, at times made her feel quite sad. Mr Liverpool's wife was one of our fastest friends. She had got a very limited education, but was remarkably handy and active, and cleanly in person, clothing, and house; an excellent cook; and of great service in the shop on market days, when he was very busy. But she was quite a zealot in religious matters; and would follow this or that minister as he took her fancy, and nothing would influence her otherwise. When offended, she was not easily reconciled, but would sulk for days and weeks; but, for all that, she was a faithful, active woman, and one of our most useful friends.

Visitors came in abundance to taste our cake and wine. Mrs Winterman was quite in her element, and busy in bringing up such of her acquaintances as had been frequently in company with Eliza at her own house. She seemed to think she could never do enough for us:

she recommended this and ordered that to be done, as if at home ; and as to expense, it seemed to give her no thought. She seemed, indeed, to be disposed to make my wife second-best in her own house ; and in fact took the principal management from her even of her own domestic affairs. Mrs Meetwell did not relish this at all ; and as for me, I was burning with anger ; but neither of us said anything, for fear of a breach of the peace. Our former difference came always into my mind ; I tried to stifle it, but fresh fuel was soon added to the flame. Mrs Winterman knew exactly the time I was absent—was often at the house then, and gone before my return ; and on these occasions I generally remarked that my wife seemed dejected and unhappy, at which I was both grieved and mortified. When this occurred again and again, I became more and more convinced that she was taking her revenge in this way ; and that before we could attain to happiness, we must come to some thorough understanding, as I had done with my uncle. Upon inquiring at my wife, I found out at last that the causes of her unhappiness were as follows :—Mrs Winterman possessed an incurable propensity to recur to old grievances, all which was painful and disagreeable to the listener's feelings ; with a strange delight in dwelling upon unpleasant things. There was no want of unpleasant remembrances. In fact, I believe that she wished to fulfil her own prophecy in regard to us—that we would be unhappy in our married state ; and, finding no obvious or palpable causes, she tried to make them. She would say that some respectable lady of her acquaintance had said, ' That it was a pity she had been in such a hurry marrying ; ' that another lady remarked, she knew where she might have done better ; making light of all I had already done, and dwelling on what was still wanting in the way of house-furnishing ; comparing her situation with that of Mrs Councillor Plausible, with their self-contained house, and garden around it ; and hinting what a fine fashionable party they had had just the week before, and how their happiness was talked of everywhere. Even now Mr Homespun's name was frequently mentioned ; his finely-furnished house described,—all having an appearance of the deepest friendly interest ; and a belief studied to be inculcated that she (Mrs Winterman) was her best friend,—she was only telling the truth ; and surely it was right that the truth should be told, and people know what the world around them was saying and doing. Never till now did I feel the full force of an expression of our Saviour : ' Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the

children of God.' If they are blessed, surely it follows that peace-breakers and busybodies are cursed !

It was part of the old lady's tactics that my wife should conceal from me what had passed between themselves two ; and, indeed, Eliza often tried to evade my inquiries ; but I was too deeply interested in her happiness, and never rested till I got to the bottom of it all. Eliza had a notion that Mrs Winterman's countenance and aid were essential to her : she had a slavish dread of her besides. How painful it was to me, when I came home to dinner in good spirits, and all right, to meet comparative embarrassment, dejection, and the newly-washed face to do away the trace of recent tears ! I reasoned earnestly with her, and generally it had the effect of restoring her to a degree of peace of mind. But sometimes I lost patience, and was compelled to take up another strain, such as, ' Well, well, Eliza, if you will nourish these unhappy fancies, if you will listen to Mrs Winterman, and believe her in preference to me, you will break down your constitution ; even already such unhappy thoughts have made you look quite sad, and a changed creature. Remember, it is I now who am the nearest, and ought to be the dearest to you in the world. If we were to become careless and indifferent about each other, which God forbid, I rather think that you and I would have much more cause to mourn.' Such an appeal was never lost on Mrs Meetwell ; she saw and felt the force and propriety of it, resolved to dismiss such gloomy thoughts from her mind, and be as happy as I could wish her. This resolution was put into practice, and adhered to, until a new attack in a different quarter from Mrs Winterman broke in upon her peace of mind, and made her unhappy again.

It may appear unaccountable why Mrs Winterman should continue to possess such power and influence over the mind of my spouse, as to be enabled to put her in this condition at her pleasure ; but when we remember that Eliza came to live with her before she was fifteen years of age, that she had been upwards of nine years on the most intimate terms with her, had through her means got the principal part of her education and what accomplishments she possessed, and that she had been accustomed to look up to her even with more deference than she had ever done to her mother, whom she had almost completely superseded in her mind, it will no longer be a wonder that the power to make her unhappy should have continued ; nor can such ties be broken asunder without much pain. Then Mrs Winterman had the knack of

making herself agreeable to all whom she chose, by administering pleasing flattery. Gross and palpable no doubt it was; but when she got it all her own way, she could go on rattling and talking, and praising and joking in such a manner as to create a buoyancy of spirit, in the midst of which the painful subjects were intruded. So it is that human nature is thus constituted, that both flattery and the flatterer become agreeable to us. I do not believe that the clear and unsophisticated nature of my wife's mind was ever warped, or her judgment blinded by these arts, but they had their temporary effect to my cost. No one who saw Mrs Winterman with her best 'company face' on, could have supposed that so much hidden bitterness lay concealed under it, ready to exert itself with such activity when excited. Yet, strange to say, she was in general reckoned a plausible, thrifty, active, managing, clever woman.

The parable of the ten talents is remarkably instructive. If we have been blessed with health and wealth, with a full measure of education, secular and religious, such as to enable us to estimate ourselves aright as in the sight of God, and to form a just judgment of others; if we then sin against light, and knowledge, and influence, and dare, in the face of an accusing conscience, to do what we know to be evil, then we have incurred a ten-fold and fearful responsibility. Such was not the case with Mrs Winterman; she was an ignorant, narrow-minded, and uneducated woman, incapable of estimating herself or the consequences of her actions aright, or of judging candidly in the case of others. But for the unhappiness thus originating, and thus affecting my wife as I have described, we had no other cause of regret. I found in my partner all that the good and discerning Mr Meek had predicted: the beautiful words 'tender and true' nearly explain all her character. I must not run into panegyrics so offensive to uninterested readers; but her character has been and will be illustrated by her actions. I devoted all my spare time to her,—not for a month or two, while this was going on, but for above a year with undiminished punctuality. When the spring came in we retraced all our former walks, with altered feelings no doubt, but with a calm pleasure, resulting from our reflections on the course of events.

Having now furnished my house as far as I meant to do, and much further than it was prudent for me to have done, I was able to ascertain what it had cost me in whole; and upon exhibiting it to my partner *in life*, she was astonished at the magnitude of the sum. It amounted

to three hundred and ten pounds twelve shillings and ninepence. I made up the account about two months after the New-year. From the middle of December till the middle of January accounts came in ding dong, one on the back of another, until a knock at the door startled us lest it should be another, and yet another! I knew the amount due by me, exclusive of my business connexions, would be considerable; and I had made up an estimate in my own mind, but the total amount was one hundred pounds larger than I expected. I was at first in consternation, not seeing how I could possibly manage to fight my way out of such a mess of debt, but I kept a good face at home. Eliza sometimes would ask if some particular account was paid yet; and when I was obliged to confess it was not, she became silent—hurt no doubt, and yet not at liberty to speak. When I saw her in this way, I used to reason with her as follows:—‘You know, Eliza, that house-furnishing comes only once in a lifetime, and it is not to be supposed that I can pay all off at once. I am paying as I can, and through course of time will get free; and if any of my creditors lose patience with us, I will raise the money for them: no part of it is above six months old yet. But give yourself no trouble about this, for it is my affair altogether. I wish, if possible, to get each of them to take goods from me in part payment, which will make it easier.’

From time to time individuals got weary, and sent in their accounts again and again, and some wrote notes which occasionally were delivered at the house. Those who pressed got part payment, and I put off the others for the time. Any one reading this might say, Why subject yourself and your wife to these mortifications, so injurious to your credit? Why not have drawn on your bank account, and kept your private creditors from getting out of humour? Because my bank credit was all drawn out, every shilling, by the end of October; and if I lodged any money in it, it was only for a few days, that I might have from fifty to one hundred and fifty pounds collected to pay a bill, or payment coming on; in truth, I was now as poor with my bank credit as I was before without it. I have been ashamed to copy down my first house-furnishing. I see so well now how differently I ought to have acted. To sink my whole bank credit in house-furnishing was really too bad. I have no excuse to offer further; all the circumstances are already before you.

It is, indeed, a great mistake to take a large house which requires a

large quantity of plenishing; it is even a servant's entire work to keep the furniture alone. It is true it is difficult to get a small rent in a respectable neighbourhood; but those who are willing can do much. The change now and then, as circumstances warrant, to a larger and better house and additional furniture is the right way. I may further remark, that it is a far too prevalent custom for young men to delay marriage till they can set up an establishment all complete. No doubt by this time he is a wealthy man, but he is forty or forty-five years of age. Then he marries a girl of twenty or twenty-five years, and expects perfect domestic happiness to be the result. The disparity of ages forbids it; the happy juvenility expires and dies away under the regulations of the old bachelor, now a Benedict, though a bachelor in heart still; and then the children never see their father but as an old wealthy man, drinking his wine. Had they seen him and had they helped him in his manhood struggle with the world, fighting his way upwards, how different would have been their feeling! But the sons, who, in the opening of life, see wine on their father's table every day, come to regard it as a matter of course. I suspect the young man who acquires this habit in early life is in considerable danger.

There was my friend Mr P. Dainty; after he began business he remained in lodgings, living quietly and cheaply, yet genteelly and comfortably under twenty shillings a week. His whole personal expenditure did not reach seventy pounds per annum for the space of three years. Having by active industry founded a good business, and having got acquainted with a fine young lady of good family, who were of strictly economical habits, he then married, and was fortunate enough to find a nice little box, in a good situation, of two rooms, bed-closet, and kitchen, rent fourteen pounds. I know his furniture did not cost him above one hundred pounds; but then his wife and his wife's family backed him up in this, otherwise he could not have done it. In this neat little house they spent four of the happiest years of their married life, and always looked back upon it with pleasure. His wife brought him a fortune of twelve hundred pounds. His rise in life was regular and progressive; and now he inhabits a suburban villa, with every comfort that an easy fortune and a well-established business can give. Had he gone about the affair as I did, it is questionable if ever he would have got his head above water. For these four years he had not the so-called indispensable spare bedroom; and when relations or friends from a distance visited them, either his wife's relations gladly afforded

them shelter, or they went to an inn—no great hardship if well fed during the day.

The charm of life is in progress. It may be slow, but if there is a regular moving on, the mind feels the safety of its position and is satisfied. This is not a question of avarice or niggardliness, it is a question of virtue and honour; for the man who lives up to or beyond his income is not honest, for the good reason that he has no reserved fund to meet unforeseen casualties, and he must pay short in the end. Moreover, when the establishment is a small one like that of Mr Dainty, the husband feels himself drawn to home; he knows his wife will have no company till he is there; and she is happy in the expectation of hearing all the news of the day told or read from the newspapers by him, to whom the exercise is as pleasant as it is to her. Oh, ladies! if I could only induce you to restrain your lovers, ere they become your husbands, from starting too high in life, to take a small house, to provide as little and as cheap furniture as will just answer the purpose, and to accustom yourselves to as little female help as possible, I am sure it would tell well in the end for your comfort and happiness; for we have to remember that while your lovers are furnishing there is a natural tendency to stretch their purse to the utmost to please you, both in the respectability of the house and the excellence of the plenishing; and on your part, too, there is the yearning to appear comfortable and well-off, that you may be at least equal to, if not able to outshine, your schoolfellows, Miss Smith and Miss Brown there, who were married last year. To follow your natural inclination is a deceiving of yourselves, and a beginning at the wrong end entirely. What is saved to your husbands is saved to yourselves; and the less you spend now, the more comfortable will you be hereafter. To hoist all sail at first, and run a risk of being overwhelmed, is not the best way of getting to the haven of your hopes.

Mrs Winterman continued to come about us with much the same results as I have already described, until early in the spring, when she had a cold of rather a serious nature, almost threatening fever. As in duty bound, we called and saw her twice. Eliza went up to her after tea, and I called to see her home. She was now better, able to be up all day, and to all appearance recovering fast. I had been there half an hour when the doctor came in; and as she often detained him half an hour we left and went home. Next day a friend of ours called by our desire to ask for her; she answered, that she had reason to be

thankful that she was getting better, but that she was rather surprised at our going away last night before we knew what the doctor's opinion of her was. This was enough for me, who had previously been irritated against her to the last degree by her persevering in making Eliza unhappy. Next day I called to inquire how she was, and found her still improving, but very dry with me, still recurring to the same subject. I explained that we saw she was so much better, and that as she frequently had a long talk with the doctor, and it was nine o'clock, we did not think there was anything wrong in leaving.

She replied, tauntingly, 'It was right to keep good hours.'

I was now nettled to my work, and said, 'By-the-by, we felt rather sore that you should have sent such a message by our friend as you did yesterday. It would have been so much better if you had waited till you had seen some of us, as it exposed us to your servant who gave the message, and to our friend who brought it.'

While I was speaking, the blood mounted to her face till it was like scarlet, and she seemed exceedingly incensed.

'And did you come here, sir,' she burst forth, 'to take advantage of me in my weak and distressed condition, to insult me to my face in my own house?' Then came a convenient burst of tears.

I said what I could in palliation; that I had not the least idea of hurting her feelings, and so on; but all in vain: she would not listen to one word, but continued exclaiming against me, and in fact pouring out upon me the whole of her long pent-up dislike. She concluded by saying, 'Take notice, sir, I never wish to see you in my house again, and tell your wife the same.'

'I will obey you, ma'am; but if we are to part under such circumstances, you must be aware that it will put a final period to our acquaintance.'

'I have told you my mind,' said she, 'and I hope you will attend to what I have said.'

I therefore took my leave. My wife was much concerned at what had happened; and I reasoned long with her. I told her it would never do to keep up a connexion which had of late left nothing but misery and unhappiness behind every visit; that, in my opinion, the sooner we had done with her the better, for I was quite sure she would never forgive me for my conduct during the last two years. 'Indeed, Eliza,' said I, 'if you can forgive her cruel conduct to yourself while in her house, previous to your going south, and the letters she wrote while

you were there, you are gifted with a more Christian and forgiving disposition than I am; for although I wish her no ill, I never can have pleasure in her company again.'

She acquiesced in my reasoning, and seemed convinced by it, but said, 'Since it is come to this, I think I cannot do less than take my dismissal from herself, and I will call on her for that purpose to-morrow;' which she did. But Mrs Winterman, so far from having softened, seemed even worse, and, on her entering, asked her sharply why she had come to trouble her again, after the message sent by me the day previous. My wife said she came for fear there might be any mistake. Mrs Winterman rang the bell; and when her servant-maid appeared, 'Take notice, Bell,' said she, 'that I have desired Mrs Meetwell to leave my house, and never to enter my door again! Is that sufficient?' turning to my wife.

Eliza said it certainly was, and bade her good-day.

Thus we parted; but not for peace. And in what I have more to say of this woman I will be as brief as I can, for even in the relation of these trifling circumstances, I feel as much disgust almost as I did at the time they happened. Messages of the most trifling, irritating, contemptible, and contemptuous nature were sent to us by servants, friends, or acquaintances; some of whom became her tools, and told such stories as she had previously put in their mouths, and seemed insensible of their degradation. Every one who would listen got an aggravated and distorted account of our quarrel, such as to make us appear the most ungrateful characters that were to be found anywhere. One gentleman—and he had a right to be called so—who came from the neighbourhood of Artoshlie, knew all Mrs Winterman's relations, and was now second master in one of our educational establishments, had been a lodger for a considerable time with her. I remember the fits of nonsensical badinage, gross flattery, and silly laughter which he and Mrs Winterman used to indulge in as rare good fun. Well, this gentleman called at our house, in my absence, as a friend, and, as he was entitled to be, was received and treated as a gentleman. He called a second time, and my wife afterwards told me the import of their interview. He mentioned what this one said, what the other one said, what everybody said,—the old story, that it was much to be regretted she had been in such a hurry marrying; that she might have done so much better, and so on. I knew by my dear wife's face some one had been making her unhappy, and soon came to a knowledge of the truth.

This was the second of her old lodgers which she, Mrs Winterman, had employed in this way. Was I wrong in feeling deeply offended by this gentleman's unworthy conduct? Surely not. About three days afterwards I met him, and saw that he was about to pass with a formal bow. 'How do you do, sir?' said I; 'you called at my house a few days ago?'

'Yes, sir, and what of that?'

'Well, not much; only I would prefer you should call when I am at home (you know my hours), that I might bear part in the conversation. I presume you came by instructions from Mrs Winterman; and the consequence, if not the intention, of your visit, was to render my wife unhappy. I don't like it.'

'Sir, I am not ashamed of my conduct in this or any other respect; and I defy you or any man to put me to the blush.'

'Perhaps,' said I, looking him in the face, 'that would not be easily done!' He did not call again.

This multiplex woman was, as a subject to write about, all but interminable. On one occasion she threatened to charge board for the whole nine years Eliza had been an inmate of her house; but forgetting, or rather overlooking—for she forgot nothing—the fact that all that time she had had the benefit of her services as an assistant, or I may say servant, who could not only have claimed board, but good wages also. Before Eliza's return from the south, when all was going on smoothly, Mrs Winterman sent her several presents. During my absence—and she knew all our motions—Mrs Winterman sent in an account of these for two pounds eighteen shillings and sixpence, desiring the maid to get the money with her. She was told I was from home. The maid returned with the account, and two lines written below: 'If you do not send the money with Bell, I will employ another.' Eliza said, 'As soon as Mr Meetwell comes home, Mrs Winterman will get an answer.' On my return home I was made acquainted with all these circumstances; got the account with her written message, and, giving it to my apprentice—now a fine-looking fellow—along with the money, desired him to say, 'Mrs Meetwell understood these were presents, otherwise they would have been paid sooner. Here is a stamp-receipt; please to sign it.' She was so taken with this unexpected mode of proceeding, that she could hardly write her name. Many a salt tear Eliza shed under the infliction of her artful and unceasing persecutors. But the worst was now over. Mrs

W. had spent her strength, and found it a losing game. Comparative peace ensued; and ere the first anniversary of our marriage came round Mrs Winterman and all these matters were almost forgotten.

Returning to my monetary condition: After having incurred a heavy expense in furnishing my house, and gained some insight as to the probable amount required for housekeeping, I felt quite convinced that my present business would not bear such an expenditure. I deliberated what I should do; and at last, in order to increase my income, so as I might live by it, I resolved to try the wholesale country trade on the same short-credit plan adopted by Mr Stately. I hoped to avoid coming in collision with him; and I would avoid calling on his particular customers. There was an obvious advantage belonging to our port in having sea conveyance of goods at a very cheap rate to all the towns on the shores of the Firth of Forth, especially such as Kirkcaldy, Leven, Anstruther, St Andrews, Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose, and Aberdeen; and then, after taking these coast towns, I could return by the inland towns. When I look back on my poor stock in those days, I am surprised that I had the hardihood or the impudence to attempt such a thing. Nevertheless I did. I ordered a few more articles to suit; and as soon as I could calculate when I would be in possession of them, I arranged samples and patterns, hired a horse and set out, but with much misgiving and trepidation. I remember well, also, how much I was afraid of leaving home lest Mrs Winterman should hear of it, and again practise on my wife any of her former annoyances. And why should I be ashamed to own that it cost us both an effort to part even for a week? The orders I got were such only as I had a right to expect, —small trial ones; all the profit on which would barely pay my travelling expenses. The landlord of 'the inn' at one of these Fife towns had a monopoly of the trade of the place. No one else had good stabling, or could give you a good bed. He was a brewer besides, and was rich; rather elderly, and tall; with well-worn clothes, a little glazed; a blue coat with dim brass buttons, a blue flap-pocketed waistcoat, short corduroy breeches, and thick dark-blue ribbed stockings, and thick-soled shoes. When I add that he wore *no braces*, you will see the man; and you may add bushy eyebrows, and a dark sinister look. After putting up my horse, my landlord sauntered towards me, and looking at me from head to foot, asked me, 'What'n a line of business will ye be in, sir?

'Various,' said I.

'Umph!' was the rejoinder.

He took his station in the little esplanade in front of his house, from which he could command the main street up and down. I had four names to call upon in this place, all in this street. I believe he watched me in and out of one or two of them, and then went and asked about me; and nobody in the burgh would refuse rich Laird Muckle any information. When I had finished and done the very little I could, I offended the laird again by asking for tea, which I got at last, hot and weak, with coarse sugar, salt butter, and loaf-bread. As I was leaving he came out, and again looking me up and down, said, 'Oh, sir, I hear you're an auld apprentice o' Mr Stately's, and come to cut him out. Faith, sir, I doubt you'll find that a tough job; but nae doubt you're free to try, sir,—ou, ay, you're free to try.' A small specimen this of what I had to encounter.

During my absence on this my first journey, a gentleman with whom I dealt, and to whom I owed one hundred and fifty pounds, called, and not finding me at home, drew a bill upon me for the amount I owed him, and left it at the bank office for acceptance. Upon my return home, the bill was presented; but I declined to accept, and asked three days to consider over it. It fell due five days previous to another bill I had current for one hundred and seventy-three pounds. I considered it over and over again, and at last I accepted it, although I was quite sure I would be hard put to it in mustering cash for both payments; yet I wished to keep well with the gentleman who had drawn upon me, for his connexion was valuable to me. I paid the first of these two bills easily, but had great difficulty in raising funds to pay the other. I borrowed from Mr Liverpool, and from my good old friend James Neelton, and from others to as great an extent as I could venture to ask; but still I was fifty-five pounds short upon the day of payment. In this emergency I made application to a tradesman, a neighbour of mine, who had begun business in the same year as I had done, and who was also a regular customer. John Garth, at his first entrance into business, was very much discouraged. For two years he had very little to do; and he used to come in and sit at my back-shop fire in the very lowest of spirits. I did all I could to cheer him up; and afterwards, when trade became better with him, I used to lend him five or ten pounds on a Saturday to pay his men. He had now for a long time been very busy; and being

a bachelor, of a very avaricious and careful turn, he was making money fast. Well, I applied to him, and told him I had particular occasion for fifty or sixty pounds, and asked him if he could oblige me with it *in any shape*. He declared it to be entirely out of his power to give me a fifth part of the sum; and he looked very much concerned. When I spoke of him obliging me with that sum in any shape, I meant to insinuate that his bill would do; but as he did not take the hint, I now spoke plainly, and he at once gave me his acceptance for sixty pounds, by which means I got through for that day; but it was a close run for it, and it was ten o'clock ere I could say I was safe. I was obliged, however, to John Garth, and he did not forget it.

All affairs were now amicably arranged between my uncle and myself; and as he had little to do, his time hung rather heavy on his hands. He was often in my house. We made just one rule with him: 'Never come when you are out of temper, but as often as you please when all is right with you.' Eliza had got quite the ascendancy over him; she had such a leisurely way of discussing matters with him, and he had plenty of time. We were anxious he should go out into the country to some cottage and plot of ground; for, being country-bred, he was very fond of working about in a garden, and had considerable skill. Our aim was to separate him from his old cronies, who were always in the way to make use of his credit or his family bottle, thereby involving him in debt and expenses, which he had now no means of meeting. He resisted the plan of the cottage, looking upon it as honourable banishment, and did not see how he could live; but at last we fell upon a plan to induce him. We employed him and Helen to make up some of our goods into small retail packages, and prepare paper and paper bags, and cloth ones for us. A cottage was at last taken very near the road; and a chance cart would take out a quantity of our goods in bulk, and bring them in again when ready. This plan wrought better than I expected at first; but Helen, for patience and kindness, would have made any plan work sweet. Our intercourse with him was now very pleasant. A thin-looking, rather genteel, gray-haired, active-like man, full of good sense and general information, he was like to be beset by his old cronies even out at Braeside Cottage; but we fell upon a plan. Twice a week he would leave home in time to take his dinner and tea with us, and not leave for home until the time

for callers was over; and he varied these days as much as possible, so that it might not be known when he would be at home. Then the disappointments became so great of not finding him at home, that many gave it up; for three miles was a long walk, and disappointment in the end of it. Helen could always offer them a bottle of twopenny; but that was not what they wanted.

A qualm frequently came over me when I reflected that my uncle's *all* was now in my hands; and if death or bankruptcy took place, he and Helen would be almost beggars. But I banished this painful thought as quick as I could get quit of it. Yes, his heritable property was burdened with as large a sum as we could get upon it. If ever a man had motives to fight, I had, for Eliza, and my uncle and Helen; and fight I did.

Meanwhile, we were blessed with children. I call them a blessing, more particularly in regard to the early period of their lives; because natural affection and the gradual unfolding of the buds of youth, both personal and mental, must give pleasure to every parent's heart who is at all deserving of the name; and my wife proved a most anxious, affectionate, and judicious mother.

There was a striking feature of Eliza's conduct: while any of her loved little ones were suffering under distress of which the issue was uncertain, all other interest was immediately sunk in the most minute care taken of the little sufferer. Sleep seemed not necessary to the mother; her wakefulness was uninterrupted; in such a hushed and humbled way did she glide about, that it produced a subdued tone and a stillness over all the house. It was by witnessing such occasions as these, that I began to see more clearly the peculiar beauty, fidelity, and self-denying nature of the female character.

CHAPTER XXI.

SHOP AND HOUSE.

In the summer of this year I got a nice upper flat of a two-storey house belonging to a land-steward. Nice private roads branched out *from it*. One road led winding through a plantation to the seaside,

the other opposite led into the interior of the country. Our house itself was on the turnpike road, only the breadth of a good garden before it. My whole establishment was transferred to the country by the middle of June. I walked out every evening very leisurely, followed, if the wind was westerly, by the sound of the various bells of the city booming along, while the evening breeze kept twirling about the leaves of the trees, and turned up their white under-sides. At a given spot I could see Eliza coming along under the shadow of the trees; and then we exchanged the news of the day.

To me it has always been a great pleasure to rise early in the light fine weather of the long day; and when I could emerge at once into and inhale the sweet morning air, and the fragrance of clover, hay, or beans, it was such enjoyment as made me lean over a stile, it may be, for a quarter of an hour. Yet I was always in my place of business by nine o'clock. I made shift for dinner with a pie or so, when I fell out; but generally some of our own folks cooked a bit dinner and tea for me; and at Mr Liverpool's I had always the run of their table.

We were fortunate in farmer Longhaughs, who took us into town to church every Sunday, as he said it was only exchanging his gig, which held two, for his market-cart, which held four; and when well loaded, as in this case, was equally easy. We paid the toll, which the farmer would not have had to pay for himself.

I had formed the idea (a little selfish) that it would do good in my business to call together my principal friends and customers to an entertainment in my house; and I carried it into effect. Supper was on the table at nine P.M. The affair went off very well; every one was pleased,—so much so, that, entering into the spirit of the hour, song after song was volunteered, encored, and chorused! It was two A.M. ere the house was cleared; but I did not feel comfortable. I doubt if such scenes are well fitted for a *flat*, or, in fact, for any other place than a tavern. It, however, became for a few years an annual occurrence. I am not sure that it did me good. I feel a little shame at recording this practice. To me now it has rather a mean bribery-like look. Our private friends we asked to tea and supper,—Councillor Plausible and his lady, Mr and Mrs Liverpool, the Withers, the Bridgewaters, young and old. These parties went off very well; no music (we had not a piano), no dancing. But it was remarked of my parties that there was much animated and improving conversation,—a consequence of a plan of mine to go from lady to lady, not to talk

nonsense to them as was the fashion, but to pay them the compliment of speaking rationally to them as capable of comprehending me, and responding to it. Our parties of friends like this, and one party of customers, cost me annually not less in all than twenty pounds. Certainly nothing could have been more pleasant or more proper than thus to have enjoyed ourselves with our friends and acquaintances, provided I could have afforded it. It was at least premature, and so thought several who heard of it, for they were provoked to say, 'Meetwell must have a good business to be able to afford all these expenses.' The return parties to which we were asked came upon us often at inconvenient periods, and all about one time, which made them rather a toil than a pleasure; besides, it took too much of my attention from my business, and it induced Mrs Meetwell to ask for a new head-dress rather oftener than she otherwise would have thought of. The most of the entertainments we were asked to, threw ours quite into the shade; and we felt some degree of mortification when we found ourselves so far behind.

It was long long ere I got my household furniture paid. The two principal sums, for which no barter would be taken, were one of thirty-eight pounds and another of forty-eight pounds. The accounts were rendered at the end of the first year; but I avoided paying any part of them until the creditors began to lose patience with me about the middle of next summer. I then paid each of them the half, which quieted them for the time. At the end of the year I was hard pushed. Notes and messages were sent me again and again; but I was obliged to bear with it. I never skulked nor neglected a note.—'Just wait a little; I am not forgetting you. I will see you with the needful as soon as in my power.' All these furniture balances were not paid up till the end of that second year.

We had now removed to another house where we would have many conveniences,—a nice two-storey self-contained house, and bleaching-green, rain-water cistern, garden, etc. It did not cost much more rent; and the getting of our clothes done at home would, we thought, make up in saving. It was a rural spot, quite outside of all town and city buildings. I was struck with the 'To Let' when I first saw it, and hied me home immediately. We examined it next day, and were charmed with the green, so newly trimmed; the trees and bushes so beautifully unfolding their buds; and then we were just in time to seed the arable part for the season. Small considerations become big when

you are in the humour to look at them favourably. The rain-water barrel was full; there was also a pump. So we made short work of it, and fixed. Here was another expense incurred: the house required cleaning and painting, although almost a new one; for the landlord made us distinctly aware he would be at no cost, except, as the saying is, to keep the house wind and water tight. What with altering carpets and grates, and portorage and cartage, and new furniture found to be indispensable to the fitting of the peculiarities of this new dwelling, I was out of pocket sixteen pounds. Let no one think they can remove from one house to another and avoid expense, if they wish to make a respectable appearance and have a comfortable residence. We enjoyed the first summer of this house very much. Our best room, which we made our sitting-room, occupied the whole breadth of the upper flat: it was seventeen feet by thirteen feet wide. One window to the south gave us the sun to our breakfast in the morning, and our north window gave us the glories of summer evening sunset, and a bright sky fading away into the twilight of the long day—so pleasant yet so short a period of our year. Our landlord lived on the same ground. We were always in good agreement with him and his wife, although it was said of them, as it is said of all cock-lairds, that no one could live on good terms with them as their tenant, in consequence of prying and intermeddling dispositions. We never found it so; and I have often noticed since, that tenants generally look on their proprietors as persons that they are bound to annoy by asking many absurd small things of them.

Summer was just passing away. We had been nearly four years married. Expenses of housekeeping were augmenting. I was exceedingly pinched for money; and to crown all, three bankruptcies amongst my customers took place, for sums of ninety-seven pounds, forty-five pounds, and thirty-six pounds,—in all, one hundred and seventy-eight pounds. Every bill coming due was to me a source of serious alarm as it approached, and a day of warm exertion when it did arrive. I borrowed money here, drew bills there, and always got through; but I never had any money in my bank account. After paying a bill I was perhaps indebted to six or eight individuals in small sums from ten to twenty pounds, one or other of whom was daily haunting me for repayment. Then the daily demands for cash to pay bill-stamps, postages, freights, housekeeping, taxes, wages, coals, rents, kept me so bare, that I may literally say I never had one sovereign to rub against

another. For some time Eliza had mentioned that she required two pounds ten shillings to pay three or four small accounts she owed. She had named it again and again. I promised as often, but as often found myself under the pressure of a stronger necessity which left me penniless; and to be candid, it was not *now* easy for me to borrow any sum, for people had become rather shy. So I delayed from time to time, hoping every day that a few pounds would come in to relieve me. One morning after breakfast she mentioned it again, and in such a way that I was touched to the quick. I said she was extremely welcome to what I had upon me, which was under ten shillings; and I emptied my pocket and left the contents on the side-table, adding, 'I cannot really say when I can give you the balance, I am so confoundedly screwed up.' She said nothing, and I departed. I daresay she thought I was pinching her needlessly. Before I could reach the road I had round the end of the house to go. Just at the point where I had to step away, I heard my name called; I looked up; it was Eliza at the window of that side, with my handkerchief in her hand, which it seems I had forgotten upon the table. I caught it as it fell. It felt heavy, and upon unfolding it, there was the money I had laid down! One look upwards: she was still there at the window, and our eyes met. I pulled my hat over my eyes and walked away.

During the whole forenoon my mind was abstracted from my business by the consideration of this circumstance. I thought at one time she was much to blame, and that it was an insult to me which I ought to resent. Again, I considered how often and how patiently she had asked for this small sum; and I felt that I ought to have borrowed it for her, knowing that it was really wanted. I could not bear the idea that our domestic happiness should be interrupted—our love for each other alienated or broken off. It might be only the beginning of a mutual misunderstanding of which no one could foresee the end. Dinner-time came; my heart was heavy. I was not prepared to say I was in the wrong; for my poverty bore me out from blame. I made up my mind to say nothing to increase the quarrel, but to despatch my dinner quietly, and think again of it before I decided. I was stepping out of the dinner parlour when she called my name; I came to her into another room. She shut the door behind me, and without a word of preface, exclaimed, 'Oh, James, can you forgive me for my conduct to you this morning? When you opened the handkerchief, and looked *up so surprised and sorrowful-like*, it struck me to the heart, and I

have been most miserable ever since. Can you forgive me?' The tears were running over her cheeks. It is surely superfluous, after having described my previous temper of mind, to say what effect this appeal had upon me. If there is one spot or time more than another in my married life bright with the reflection of the fullest emotion, the most sincere happiness, the sweetest transition, this is the spot, this is the time! If there is one period more than another when Eliza was peculiarly dear to me, when I felt she was indeed my own, my true and affectionate friend and companion, this was that moment! O humility! how sweet, how lovely, how endearing art thou! Humility of a noble mind, seldom requiring to humble itself; therefore the more to be valued! Oh the gush of joy which flooded my heart! How sweet to live with one of such high virtue and lowly bearing! Well saith Solomon, 'A soft answer turneth away wrath.' So far were we from feeling that our misunderstanding had produced any bad effects, that I may say we knew each other now better than we had ever done before; and our affection for and confidence in each other were increased. But it was long ere I noticed that it was not I who had the merit of it,—not I who had made the first advance; and that, moreover, my gratified pride by her submission was extremely pleasant. But this was happily settled,—the most serious difference that had ever threatened our domestic comfort.

If it was sweet to live with one so constituted as my partner was, how exceedingly uncomfortable must their life be who possess sour, sullen, and argumentative tempers! It matters not how trivial the original cause of difference may be, for its effect is nearly always the same. Each tries to fix the blame on the other: a stern protracted anger follows each contention for victory. Regardless each of the feelings of the other, out come the severe retorts, the cutting assertions, the indelicate and perhaps rude epithets, forming each of them an offence of ten times the magnitude of the original cause of quarrel. Then the relapse into days, perhaps weeks, of sullenness. How uncomfortable, rather how insupportable, is life rendered when attended by such circumstances—a disposition to argue every little matter, and unconquerable desire to vindicate one's self in every trifling difference! 'Did I not say so?' 'Was I not in the right?' 'Was I not?' (People who interest themselves will easily see who was right without all this crowing about it.) This hateful and anti-social propensity ought to be carefully guarded against by parents, for it is a natural

propensity ; and, as such, being easily imitated, if once it take firm root in the minds of young people, it is the work of a lifetime to subdue it and keep it in due bounds. In a family, disputes and arguments about trifling matters ought to be seriously discouraged. If not, improving conversation may be said to be debarred access to the family ; for no one can utter a dozen of words without being interrupted, and the correctness of his statements called in question, even before the statement is completed, so that you are led away from the main body of the subject in hand, and the moral bearing of it is quite lost sight of in an argument got up about some petty detail.

The beauty and improving use of conversation is to exchange your sentiments quietly ; and after you have thought over them, then you may animadvert with propriety, but even here you must be contented to exchange animadversions respectfully and alternately. If it is a matter of importance, the gentlest intimation that we hold a different opinion does not imply that it is to be on that account less firm or efficacious. It is generally the reverse : the individual addressed hears you without anger, considers your proposition, and you have a chance to make a convert ; while, on the contrary, if your opponent is inflamed by your tenacity of arguing, your iterations, reiterations, and sharp contradictions, then you have shut the door against reason, and probably the opportunity of making a convert or gaining or retaining a friend.

I must, however, admit that amidst my domesticity, my predisposition to enjoy myself, as I had learned to do in Glasgow with Mr Bluff and at the club, still clung to me. During the two first years of my housekeeping I scarcely ever offended by staying out after shop-shut ; but as my business grew larger, and my difficulty of obtaining money to meet bills increased, I began to be from home one or two nights a week. I was particular enough in my company : I was either with some of my English friends from whom I bought goods,—for it was quite the fashion in those days for them to treat their customers, and many a partner and many a traveller fell before it,—or I was with some good customer who had come in about shop-shut, or some one who had befriended me by lending me cash. I was sophist enough to try to persuade myself that all this was necessary, and good for my business ; but at other times, when I analyzed my motives and calculated the expense I was thus put to, I found that inclination was to blame for *more than* one-half of these transgressions. I do not mean to say I

got tipsy; no, I never did; but it was bed-time when I got home, and I had not the approbation of my own mind to carry on cheerful conversation. As to these offences, my wife said nothing except when two or three nights of late hours occurred pretty closely together, and forced her to take notice of them. Even then she did not say much, the dejected and thoughtful aspect was reproach enough.

Notwithstanding all these faults, Eliza's companions complimented me often upon my regularity and attention as a husband. We were often seen together at church, at a walk, and occasionally at market; and as I was of a quiet disposition, and went home generally at shop-shut, my character in the world as a sober man, a thriving merchant, and a good moral domestic character, stood A 1. I could stand a contrast. There was Councillor Plausible and his lady, the intimate acquaintance of my wife before marriage. He was a dashing unscrupulous fellow, caring for no rules, nor yet for his wife's peace of mind. Splendid and gay in appearance as they were, yet their home was a home of misery; he had a loud, scornful, deil-may-care sort of laugh to put down all serious remonstrance, while she, bred as a lady, proud, and of an acute and feeling temperament, felt exceedingly hurt, and expressed herself in pointed language. Again the Councillor could charm her by a week of sunshine and blandishment, and revive within her sensitive nature all the transports of first love. And so on alternately, each elevation adding to the depth of the next descent. She did not always try to conceal how miserable she was; and yet a more handsome, better dressed, genteel couple you would not meet in the sunshine of our gay city.

My wife did not often ask me, when I came home, whom I had been with; she reserved this for next morning. I sometimes was accompanied by an individual who, although rich enough, yet was rather given to quarrelling and litigation. He was a customer, and used frequently to beset me at shop-shutting. Well, I had been twice in 'Jenkie's' company, as he was nick-named, in one week, and again once in the ensuing week, but the third time my friend Mr Liverpool was with us. On the ensuing morning Eliza said, 'Well, were you with your friend Jenkie again?' 'I was with Mr Liverpool,' said I; but feeling that this was dastardly conduct, and while yet in time, I added, 'But Jenkie was there also.' How nearly was I to entering on a course of deceit! Thank God, I never disguised the truth from her, nor she from me—no, never; and I say it most deliberately!

While on this subject, I may remark that the most efficacious and the easiest applied remedy I can prescribe to heal up domestic differences between married people is, 'On no occasion whatever allow yourselves to forget the common civilities of life, even a show of respect.' When the parties are past speaking, as the saying is, it must be evident that if ever a reconciliation is to take place, some one of the two must begin it. Let the party who is wronged do so; for it is easier for one who has suffered wrong to forgive it, than for the one who has inflicted the wrong to make the sacrifice, for pride gets up in arms to vindicate their character. My practice, after a casual twist, was, if I remembered any interesting bit of news, to tell it in as indifferent a manner as I could assume. Perhaps I got no answer at first, but the ice was broken, and the next attempt was easier to me; besides, it was a kind of tacit apology. To married people I would say, Oh beware of treating concessions, even of the slightest sort, with disdain, or of throwing them back when offered to you with anger or contempt! It costs a mind of any dignity a severe struggle before it can submit to make an apology; and if, when offered in a spirit of humiliation, you toss it back or throw it from you, you are not likely soon to be troubled in that way again. You may then see fire in the eye which you never saw before,—a sullen coldness and a real indifference not soon, if ever, to be forgotten or eradicated. I am speaking of parties who have good principles, mature judgments, and are conscientious Christian-minded people. If one of the parties happens to be a fool, the other must just put up with it. It would be telling many a one to have a fool for a wife,—better a foolish partner than a base one!

During her abode with Mrs Winterman, my partner had had very high ideas of fashionable life instilled into her mind with the utmost care,—ideas the more absurd perhaps, that Mrs Winterman herself was not a lady or a fashionable, only a worshipper of the fashionable and wealthy, and generally accepting the vulgar saying of 'The more cost the more honour!' Although she was now aware that these ideas were unsuitable to my station in life, yet they did occasionally prevail against her more deliberate judgment; and I used to rally her, and say she had as many plans formed of what she would like to have, what she would like to do, and what she would like to alter, as would cost fifty pounds to carry them all into execution; to which she used to reply, 'Well, let us talk about them, since it is not likely they will

ever go further ; we may have that pleasure at any rate, as it costs nothing ;' and so they remained, until in some lull of prosperity, when no pressure was upon me, I would, from my desire to gratify her, revive the remembrance of some of her plans, and see them carried into execution. Any day that she had been making a round of visits, her remarks were well worth attending to. She compared the advantages and disadvantages in the situation and circumstances of each of her friends with good judgment and discrimination ; and, generally speaking, it made her better pleased with her own lot, and to say she would not exchange. But when she had been visiting the poorer class of her acquaintances, some of whom required a little assistance from her,—when she had seen the scanty meal, the patched garment, the pinched face of the poor mother, doing her best amongst her fatherless little ones,—then, indeed, she came home with a heart full of the most lively gratitude to God for all the blessings she enjoyed. At such times I was generally at home to dinner before she returned. Without taking off bonnet or pelisse, she would seat herself in a corner of the sofa, and for ten minutes would express the overflowsings of her heart with much feeling. It was most agreeable to hear her.

These subjects bring me naturally to the remembrance of my early sentiments in favour of family religion. Had I established it in my own house now that I had an opportunity ? No ; I am sorry to say I had not done so. Yet the fault was mine entirely, for my wife, although in no way rigorous in matters of religion, showed a liking to, and a warmth of feeling in all devotional exercises, whether at church or at home—for we did read and pray together at home privately—in such a manner as was sufficient to show, as far as man could judge, that her heart was right with God ; otherwise she could not have welcomed every occasion of its exercise with such pleasure and gratitude. I am ashamed to avow the paltry motives which prevented me from carrying into effect the worship of God before all in my house. Yet they must be avowed ; they are not concealed from Him ; and I may as well confess them to any of my friends and family who may see this narrative. One motive was, that I would not have freedom of utterance in prayer if the servants were called in. Another was, that my education and natural acquirements were not such as to fit me for properly discharging this duty, and I was afraid of turning a solemn service into ridicule by my awkwardness. This last was a motive avowed in my discourse with my wife as a reason ; but in my heart I

had no such fear; on the contrary, I felt confident that one hour's study on Sabbath morning would have enabled me, not only to go through the duty, but to do it in a manner creditable to myself and profitable to my hearers, that is to say, if it pleased God so to bless me. What were the real and hidden motives of my heart? First, seasons of careless security, during which I seemed to have youth, and health, and riches, and pleasures awaiting me for many years to come; and I was not inclined to think too deeply on such subjects as the depravity of human nature, or the salvation offered us by a Redeemer who inculcated self-denial and other painful duties upon His disciples; nor did I think it needful for young people like us to become too familiar with such subjects as death and immortality, in which we were taught that as we had lived and believed in this world, so should it be with us for ever. I had a general disinclination to speak of or to contemplate such subjects. Then I had seasons when gloomy shadows of infidelity and unbelief darkened my mind with their blasting influence, making me careless of religious duty, and even causing me to feel as if it was too humbling to avow myself, on my knees and before my whole family, as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know the heavy sentence pronounced by our Lord: 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words before the world, of him shall I also be ashamed before men and angels at the last day.' I have often felt this sentence lie like lead upon my soul; and yet there was not vital warmth to overcome it in my faith and love. Strange it seems to me now, that under this pressure of my conscience, I could not find inclination to cast myself upon the mercy of God, who hath promised that none shall in earnest seek His face in vain. I have been no formalist, no intended hypocrite; nor have I been an open violator of the precepts or practice of Christianity—no scorner of its doctrines, no scoffer at pious followers of the Gospel. I can scarcely tell what I have been. I have had occasional fits of piety and devotion; have attended ordinances on ordinary and extraordinary occasions; yet I am conscious of a great want of a living faith to give energy and sincerity to my profession of love and affection to the Saviour, and to enable me so to live as that, not viewing this world as my home, I might yet be able to enjoy the many good things God has given us freely to enjoy here,—be enabled to do my duty as a Christian by precept and example to those around me, and look forward with a serene hope to another and a better world. So much miscellaneous

reading in my early life, the want of a proper friend or preceptor to guide my steps in religious knowledge, had the effect of making the tablets of my memory a record of speculative opinions; and yet somehow I cannot bring myself to regret this, for I never sought out infidel books, nor read one except Tom Paine, which I found on the side-table of a friend, and I am sure it made no hurtful impression on me. But it would never do if one generation after another were to walk in the beaten path without inquiry; in that case it would be abandoning the government of the world to priests; and the history of the world tells us that, wherever this prevails, the people are greatly the worse of it. No; argue as we will, man must inquire, and will ground his belief on his convictions. And yet is there not a natural bias in the mind of man to set himself in opposition to that which is established, and just because it is so, whether in government or religion, and a pride which soothes the mind in such a cause as this: 'I will not be blindfold; I will think for myself?' And so perhaps he fancies himself a bold man and an original thinker. Be it so; but let the mind remain candid and humble, hearing the one side as candidly and patiently as the other, and there is such an amount of excellence in Christianity that none but a determined bigot can long resist believing in it.

CHAPTER XXII.

IMPROVEMENT AND PROGRESS.

TRADE with me now was very good, and my business considerably augmented. Every acceptance I offered to my banker was, as a matter of course, put to my credit. All bills granted by myself were regularly paid when due. The most respectable firms instructed their travellers to call upon me, and to offer their goods on the best terms. I bought freely, until, at one of my balances, I had as large a stock of goods as four thousand eight hundred pounds. My north country circuit now occupied me twenty-one days, every six months. I had a number who remitted on receipt of goods, others who allowed me to draw upon them at the end of the quarter, by which means I got in money in time to meet my heavy buying; and I might have been easy, and have got

into smooth water, had I been very careful in my laying in stock ; but I had a weak point here : I was vain of giving good orders, and I always thought I could push them off. The articles were good, and they were cheap ; but pushing off always reacted upon me in a most injurious manner, for good people will not be put out of their own careful way to please you. I also made detached excursions to the south, and my local trade was nearly doubled ; so, to all appearance, I was a rising man.

Mr Stately continued his business as usual ; no, not as usual, yet to a considerable extent ; but he was much changed, and had lost his distinguishing characteristic of a sharp man of business. He was now easy, lazy, and indulgent ; the trouble so necessary to keep good customers and make new ones he could not take ; besides he was proud, and when pressed by a more active opponent than himself, used to leave the contest in a sort of huff. The consequence of all this was, that he lost the best part of his connexion, I mean the cash-payers. As a matter of course, he did more and more with inferior people, and he got into the way of speaking of his customers as *his friends*, and glossing over all matters of business with an air of great friendliness. This suited many of them very well, though his accounts were only increased with his limited number of customers individually.

He drew, while on his journeys, for every shilling owing to him, and discounted his acceptances in the country banks. Formerly he had an eager desire to save every sixpence of expense on the road ; now he seemed to regard expense as quite a secondary consideration. He was twice the time upon his journeys which he used to be, and did no more business, if so much as formerly. If he met with a 'real good fellow' at any of these country inns, he would stay over the night with him ; and he would frequently make an excursion with some of his customers as his companions, either visiting curiosities or seeing friends, all of which time, as the saying is, they would be living at 'rack and manger,' and if Mr Stately did not pay all expenses at the time, he did so in the end. Nevertheless, ostensibly Mr Stately was one of the first in his line, a gentlemanly, generous man ; and if he was at times a little mellow, why, they liked him all the better for it.

Twelve months after this, a season of universal dulness in trade spread over the country ; agriculture was not excepted ; and bankers, fearing impending mischief, became shy, and would not do things as they did them before. Almost a general demand for renewals from

Mr Stately's *friends* was made upon him. He would have renewed, because he could not take up the bills out of his own funds, not having any, but the bankers demurred. They had had meetings in many parts of the country for mutual confession, and to resolve on what they should do, each coming prepared with his list of names on whom he wanted a judgment from his neighbour. Near the top of each list was Mr Stately and his connexions; they were marked 'D,'—doubtful. Mr Stately awoke as from a dream, amazed at a difficulty he had never anticipated. In vain he waited personally on the bankers; their answer was, 'The bank will renew if you give a good name in addition, or if you pay one-third part.' Mr Stately's customers had been accustomed to renewals. There were so many professions of friendship a-going, that they counted on it as a matter of course, and were very much hurt that it was not granted at once, never supposing that Mr Stately had it not in his power, though he durst not tell them so; and on his part he was irritated to find every one, day after day, laying their burdens upon him, without very much ceremony. That he should lose his temper under such circumstances is not wonderful; nor that he should write sharp letters and receive as sharp in return, from various reasons, chiefly 'goods sent which were not strictly ordered,' and 'promises made of support which had never been asked before, and now to be refused in this way on the first application; I did not expect it;' so he was sadly beset. He could not confess himself unable; and when at last he did avow this, none believed him, if it was not looked upon as an insult, as a mean equivocation, an attempt to back out. The bills fell due, were not paid, and passed into the lawyer's hands. In vain he wrote his *friends* they *must* pay their bills; that word 'must,' coming from Mr Stately, hurt them exceedingly, yet they felt sure he was between them and all real danger. The banker selected one for an example, and proceeded with all the despatch the law allowed—pounded, advertised, sold. This fell like a thunderbolt on Mr Stately and all his connexions. He was next made aware that arrestments of his current accounts would be issued and not only so, but his person was in danger—he *might be put in jail*!

Not till now did he feel thoroughly alarmed, nettled, and powerless. During this time his friends had spoken repeatedly to him, but found he was haughty with them, asserting that he could do his own turn, and so forth. But now he felt he must have a thousand pounds to extricate him from his difficulties, and pay his debts coming due. His

friends consented, provided he would give them a bond, making them as thoroughly masters of himself, his person, and all his trade and effects at any time they might think proper to step in, as law and lawyers could make it. He did not boggle, did not care, thought all these stipulations mere bugbears, and rejoiced to think he was once more a free man. But he did not get the money! No, his friends would not trust themselves to him in that way. He was very angry, but had to give up his bill-book and other books. The money was applied as bills became due; and several of his friends were consigned to the care of judicious lawyers, who took the cash from the poor people as they could get it out of them. The next time Mr Stately went to the country he was shorn of half his importance. He could not do so much business by one-half; and his friends had advised him to cease from ordering goods for a time, as far as possible to exhaust his stock on hand, and not to ask large orders from doubtful people. It was spiritless work, but he came home on Saturday. His friends rather rejoiced at the flattering appearance of amendment he now assumed. I believe he tried all he could, but his habits were strong. I never saw him in his thoughtful or repentant mood, so I cannot well judge him; but they were all of them a hard family. The journey following he evidently got a little loose again; in the one succeeding it he went quite astray, and a person was deputed to bring him home at once. His friends now acted on the bond, and entered into possession of his estate. A clerk was put into his office, and all cash transactions had to pass through his hands. Dreadfully mortified at these proceedings, and at the circulars issued without his sanction, Mr Stately quitted the premises, and for ten days it was not known where he was. He was found at last in an obscure public-house, labouring under temporary delirium. He got better at home; and as soon as he was able for business, they again began to urge him formally to abdicate, and give up his trade. This he absolutely refused to do; and very high words arose among them. Again he left home, and was not discovered for a month or two; but he had one and sometimes two of his cronies with him always, and it was their interest to keep the secret of his abode. Diligence was now prepared by his relations; he was apprehended and kept in a lodging in custody of an officer for a few days, till he was glad to comply with all his friends required of him. He always insisted that there should have been a handsome surplus from his estate. His rela-

tions, on the other hand, say they were six hundred pounds out of pocket.

They had prepared a place for him in Glasgow in the counting-room of a respectable friendly firm, who allowed him sixty pounds a year, and he was employed in such work as he was quite conversant with. I was in Glasgow two years after, when he was still in the same place, and I called upon him. He seemed glad to see me; and I made an appointment with him at eight o'clock in the evening. He was punctual, and I felt very strange. He was quite clean; his clothes were good, but not new, his trousers a little scuffed. He was very quiet and gentlemanly; a green coat with black velvet collar; an amber-coloured vest, with drab trousers. I will never forget his changed appearance. I had much trouble in maintaining the conversation. I kept telling him everything about everybody. In asking how he liked the place, he said, 'Oh, Mr Smith is a complete gentleman; he delights to make every one happy, and he would not hurt my feelings for the world. But some of the youngsters are impudent at times;' and he added, 'If I had got fair play, I should not have been here.'

I was glad when our second tumbler of rum-punch was finished; for I saw him growing sadder the longer we sat. I never saw him again. But I know his friends never lost sight of him. I will never forget that quiet, sad gentlemanly look of his—the last vision I had of him.

I have been particular about the fate of this man for a reason. Had he married at the time I was with him—and he might have done so under every advantage—the chances are, that he might have had a long and a happy life; but, as I said before, his was a hard family, with very little intellectual or refined domestic enjoyment about the fireside,—a sad blank, gaping to be filled up by vice. May this not fairly be said to be another victim to convivial habits? His recovery is hopeless. Henceforth he may endure his protracted existence; but it can scarcely be expected that he will enjoy his life, degraded as he is from his rank in society, and in a state of banishment from his friends, who only support him so long as he remains absent from his native city, with all his dear friends and its charming associates.

To return to the narrative of my own matters: I mentioned that my trade was extending fast; that my stock was as high in value as

forty-eight hundred pounds. It looks almost incredible that I should have been able to hold a stock of that size. It was far from being an easy situation. It was a very improper one, and I must add, most unsafe and dangerous. My stock should have never exceeded twenty-five hundred pounds. I would then have done the same amount of business, and with double the profit. In this case my stock would have required more watching. I must have ordered my goods more frequently and in smaller parcels. Had I done so, they would have had this advantage—they would have been always fresh, popular, and to suit the prevalent taste of the day. Every kind of goods, almost without exception, lose in some manner if we have more in hand than we can readily sell. Some waste in keeping; others are seasonable goods, on which there is a great loss if they lie over; and of some the fashion passes away, and they are almost lost. They get into odds and ends, and cannot be easily matched again; and there are many other evils attendant upon overstock. You have goods in great quantity lying about you; and the time is drawing nigh when you must pay for them. You get anxious. The regular demand is too slow for you, and you sell to improper people, and that not in moderate quantities befitting the man's trade, but you forward twice as much as he has any want of. And what tempts you to do this? Why, because you wish to get a bill for a certain amount in order to enable you to meet a payment of your own coming due. This is not all: you run a double risk with a weak man; and when this bill is due, he gives himself no trouble about paying it, and comes to you as a matter of course for a renewal; and how can you refuse it? Sometimes, too, if the goods fall, you must submit to deduction, or take them back sadly deteriorated. But the greatest evil of all is, that with a large stock, and little or no capital, you cannot obtain the cash discounts. As matters are at present conducted, cash discounts are the very essence, life, and soul of business.

If you are known to be a cash-payer, every attention is bestowed upon you; the best quality, the lowest price, the quickest service—all are yours; even notice is sent you when it will be for your advantage to buy before an advance in price; or to refrain from buying, as a fall is expected.

I made no payment at all except by bill, and that at the *longest possible date*. My credit at all the banks was good enough, because my bills were always regularly paid, and therefore those who took my

acceptances had no trouble in cashing them ; but some of the high-toned English houses grumbled at the date of my bills, and I had frequently to pay stamp and interest ere they would accept them. The hope of getting a good order, which I was noted for giving, facilitated my settlements, and made them bear with my long-winded bills, as they called them ; and sometimes I got a renewal of a whole or a part ; but it was dangerous to name such a thing to any respectable house, and some even indignantly refused. I always wrote circumspectly, neither asking too anxiously, nor giving them reason to think I could not do without it, and I generally succeeded ; but never without a hope expressed that this should be the last application of the sort. I drew bills on all my customers who would allow me, even for more than they owed me at the time the bill was granted, and also shortly after their accounts had commenced to run. Each of these negotiations was an affair of humiliation to me ; for I was obliged to ask this accommodation as a favour, and promised to renew all bills granted me under such circumstances. At times, however, I met an indignant refusal. Sometimes, when making an amicable settlement with any of my English connexions, I would venture to say, ' I wish you would put forty or fifty pounds to it, and give me the money ; it would be very handy for me this week.' I frequently succeeded. On one occasion I was settling pleasantly with a gentleman of sixty years, and I ventured to make the same request to him, and as he appeared not to understand me, I repeated my request to him more distinctly. He laid down his pen, pushed back his silver spectacles to the top of his head, and gave me such a lecture ; the abbreviation of which was, that it was the second time in his life he had been asked to do such an improper thing, and that if he had not had an excellent opinion of me, he would have closed our account that moment. Did not my ears tingle ! I will give another specimen of what a needy man may be forced to do. Mr Hardyman was a shopmate of mine in Crafty's in Glasgow, and always manifested respect and affection for me. He had been in business for himself for seven years in the west of Fife. He came to me when he commenced business, and opened an account with me ; and I and another became surety for a bank-credit to him for one hundred and fifty pounds. We continued to deal most pleasantly. Every journey my money was ready to the last shilling, and on one of them he paid me seventy-five pounds cash. Yet this man I could not let alone, but drew on him frequently in

advance. On a journey he had given me a good order; but there were two commodities which had been named between us, and he had said he would not want any of them just yet: however, I ventured to send him a lot of each, and drew a bill upon him for eighty pounds. I made the best apology I could, and said the goods sent extra were likely to rise in price, and I had sent them on a profit of two and a half per cent. That day week the carrier's cart came to my door—the carrier himself looking very grim. I divined what was wrong. The goods sent without order were unloaded, and the carrier walked in.

‘I want eighteen shillings from you, Mr Meetweell, for the carriage o’ these gudes backarts and forrits. You forced me to tak’ them this day week, and Mr Hardyman forced me to tak’ them back; for he would not let them light in his shop. I never saw him sæe angry. An’ blamin’ me too, as if I had had any business with it!’

I was very glad to pay him to get him out of my shop; but he turned back, and handed me a letter from Mr Hardyman, in which he said he had not taken in the goods sent without any order, having no need of them, and that he declined to accept the bill for eighty pounds; but in order that I might not be very much disappointed, he had sent me his promissory-note for fifty pounds; and he added, ‘I would much rather have nothing to do with bills at all; and in future, when you want money, let me know, and I will send it to you if I have it at the time.’ This considerate conduct on the part of my friend, and the merited rebuke his letter contained, cut me deeply, and I felt grateful to him for having dealt so tenderly with me. It seems strange I did not lose his connexion altogether, but I did not. He paid off his bank-credit next year; but it made no difference in our dealings. Hardyman was a strange creature,—illiterate, abrupt, and coarse in his manner; yet he was a strict economist, and in his bookkeeping, which was very limited, correct and clear. The two hours I spent in his place every journey were quite a treat to me. His little ledger was so clear, *pro* and *con.*; his money counted and ready; his list of goods wanted made up. He knew so well what he required, and what he did not want, that to do business with him was a pleasure.

From the particular manner in which I have noticed these instances of my difficulties, it may be supposed I have a pleasure in doing so, and a pride in the narration. I do it because I have professed to give an impartial account of myself as far as I can; for no man can be

thoroughly impartial in his own case. It is not in his power to detect and analyze his self-love.

Owing to the large stock of goods I kept on hand, and the opening up of the whole country by railways being in prospect, I was induced to make a radical change to premises three times as large as those I had hitherto occupied, and very commodious. I got a most favourable lease, and could carry on my business with much more freedom and correctness. The fitting up of these new premises cost me one hundred and fifty pounds, besides all that I had formerly. In every respect my new premises were preferable to my old, as well as respected my country trade as my credit customers, let alone the central nature of the place. I had cause to be well pleased; but my old-established ready-money retail trade was reduced to half the amount it formerly was. This was a bit of a damper; for a little ready money dropping in continuously is like oil to a machine, making it to work easily and without noise.

Winterman junior had also been launching out largely, and had built admirable premises, almost unequalled for his trade in the town. They were elegant and convenient, with a nice dwelling-house attached. In short, all was right but one thing—he had no money to build with. It was believed that he was a thriving man. He was known to be active and attentive to business, and had the reputation of making as good articles as any one in his line. He was very vain of this character; and it was said and believed by many that he often bestowed such pains on his work, and wrought such costly materials, that, so far from making a profit, he was working at a loss. The building he had erected had, with the ground it stood upon, and which he purchased and paid for out and out, cost two thousand eight hundred pounds. He borrowed one thousand seven hundred pounds upon it, and more he could not get; so that he, who was poor enough before, had this additional one thousand one hundred pounds hung round his neck. He came to me, as he had good right to do, and asked my assistance, and I gave him one hundred pounds, taking his bill for the same; or, to speak more correctly, I discounted his bill for that sum, and gave him the proceeds. I had no misgivings about him then; he was so cheerful, bustling, and active. He came again; but now my fears were roused, and I told him the story of my own troubles, and so frightened him that he vanished. These building bills of his, as well as others for heavy purchases of goods to adorn his new showrooms,

had put him into very deep water. They kept circulating round and round him until he got dizzy, and people began to think it was endless, and bankers began to frown upon them. From whence the check came I did not learn; but I suppose he could not raise money for his fortnight's wages. About a month after I had refused him, John Garth came to me one Saturday morning, and said he had heard some unpleasant reports about Winterman junior. I was startled; and we went to his house immediately to see him. He had gone from home that morning early, and was not expected back till late, if he came at all that night. His wife seemed agitated. Our suspicions were confirmed, and we got very much alarmed. Garth was involved with him considerably. We looked anxiously for him all that day; and when evening came we called and sent repeatedly to his house, but he had not returned. We then went to the stableyard from whence he had hired his horse and gig, gave the hostler a shilling, and the promise of another to call upon us at a certain tavern and let us know the moment he arrived. We sat from nine till twelve o'clock waiting in vain for the hostler's return, and listening in vain to catch the sound of wheels. Garth was uncommonly dejected and alarmed; he clenched and wrung his hands repeatedly, exclaiming from time to time, 'If Winterman has failed, I am done for,' and such like. He said he thought he was involved with him in two accommodation-bills about one hundred and sixty pounds, and that it would take all he had to pay them. I tried to argue him into better spirits, but I did not succeed. We parted, each of us heavy enough of heart, for I had now little doubt it was all over with Winterman junior; and when I looked at the connexion between him and myself,—at that which existed between him and my uncle for his cash-account bond, and also thought that Garth might be so injured by him as either to be unable or unwilling to renew the bills I held with his name for my accommodation, I began to think that this might be a very serious business, of which I could not well foresee the termination. Garth called on Sunday morning to inform me that Winterman had not yet returned, nor did he return all that day; but so restless was my poor friend, that he was at me again by five o'clock on Monday morning to say that Winterman had returned over night. Garth had a most haggard and dismal appearance; he had not slept, he said, half an hour the two preceding nights. We went together to Winterman's house a quarter before six. His wife answered the door. She said he had never been home. We were rude enough

to doubt the poor woman's word, at which the long-suppressed agitation she had laboured under got vent in tears. She opened the door wide to us, desiring us to go in and satisfy ourselves, adding—'God knows what is the meaning of all this; but I wish I saw my gudeman again; for I know nothing about him, nor where he is, any more than you do.' In the course of the day an end was put to our doubts by a gentleman calling to ask our support and vote as trustee on Winterman junior's estate, he having applied for sequestration.

We had nothing to do now but to sit down and calculate our liabilities, at which we were busy when my uncle came in. He was uncommonly affected, and durst scarcely trust himself to speak. I said to him, 'I see you have got hold of the bad news already; but I presume you are no otherwise connected with him than your share of his cash-account.' He shook his head; and at last he told us he had signed either two or three bills to him; and further, that there was a claim for about thirty-three pounds for a particular sort of material he had given an order for at Winterman's request, who had been doubted for some time unknown to us. Winterman had taken advantage of his weakness and good-nature, and got a hold of him from time to time. This was truly grievous; and I felt very angry that he had thus victimized an old man in such a treacherous manner. But again, who can promise for himself when under the pressure of necessity? for what can be more true than 'Necessity has nae law?' and a man without cash is necessity personified.

Our ascertained liability we made out to be five hundred and fifty pounds, of which three hundred lay upon my uncle's shoulders, and two hundred and fifty on mine. This was a heavy blow for us. I did not fear that I would not get over it; I felt confident I would; but it took away from me that assurance I had of late felt that I would now make money, for I saw it would be twelve months at least before I could clear away the bad effects of it; and a fearful anxiety, a timidity, and an aptness to get alarmed, took possession of my mind. One evening Eliza called in just as we were shutting up; Garth and my uncle were with me. We were preparing to adjourn to a tavern to have out our crack; but she said we had better go with her, and we would get a haddock to the bargain, and uncle could walk home in the fine moonlight. We did so, and as we talked quite unreservedly, my poor wife was amazed as the whole truth came out. Nothing I could say would keep up her spirits; she concluded we were ruined. My

uncle's property was immediately advertised for out-and-out sale. Hitherto it had only been bonded, and we calculated on a reversion of two hundred pounds yet to come from it. My wife had not of late been strong. We had now four children, one of whom was just weaned; she had had much fatigue in consequence, and this had rendered her thin and delicate. This blow falling so suddenly on us had a singularly painful effect upon her. For twenty days after this she was attacked by acute pain in the head, coming every morning about seven o'clock, and in spite of every attempt to alleviate or remove it, continuing unabated until about two P.M., when it began to fade away. Nothing that a humane and skilful doctor or her sympathizing lady friends could think of was left untried, but all was in vain for that three weeks; it then gradually faded away, lessening its duration daily until it disappeared; but it left her very weak. It was now the season to enjoy the benefit of the country air; and for her sake I hurried her away, with the whole children and servants, as usual.

Meanwhile I had got all Winterman junior's bills taken out of the way, and my hopefulness was returning fast. Mr Bluff, my friend, agreed to take his place on my cash-account bond, and he did it in such a kind and hearty way as doubled the obligation. I had need of something to cheer me up, and this did so. But as for my poor uncle, it took him by the heart to sell his property, and he swithered so long about it that a charge on one of the bills was given him ere he would sign the papers authorizing the bank agent to sell, and he only did this upon condition that he should get a discharge from all liabilities connected with Winterman's estate, however the property might go.

Only one bank now remained to be settled with. The manager was pompous, but kind-hearted. The papers had been left with him for some time. In place of asking my uncle to come into his private room, he came stepping forward to the counter, where several others were at the time. 'So, Mr Meetwell, you are going to pay your bills with five shillings in the pound now, are you?'

'It is not my own bill, sir; I always paid my own bills.'

'Ah, but your name is upon it; and you should never put your name upon a bill if you are not ready to pay it.'

'Well, sir, I have done all I can; I have sold my property to pay everybody as far as it will go; and I have nothing else in the world left me.'

Here my uncle's firmness gave way, and he turned aside. The

banker was touched; he saw the old man's emotion, the quiver of his lip, and calling him to him he said, 'There now, I'll sign your paper, for I believe you are an honest man; and I wish we had many more like you.'

He came home to us brimful of happiness. The few words the banker had said of sympathy were a perfect cordial to him; he would get all his private debts paid now, and he was quite delighted.

Being urged by an English commercial gent to buy largely of a kind of goods that I sold regularly, and tempted with an offer of a reduction of five per cent., I acquiesced, upon the principle that I would push them off. I was also to get twelve months' credit. Yet my gentleman was down upon me at the end of six months, and wanted a six months' bill, although I had only had the goods three months. But I durst not, when I looked at my bill-book; and I would give him nothing but a nine months' bill, in strict terms of our bargain, with which he was forced to be contented so far. But this affair did not end here. Tom Nobleman had been long on the road; every one in our line knew him, and there never was any one more generally beloved by all who dealt with him. An Irishman by birth, served an apprenticeship in Dublin, came over to England, and ultimately became partner in a manufactory of goods in which I dealt. He dealt with my uncle, and with Mr Stately and P. Crafty before my day, and now he held a number of commissions of the first respectability. He kept a heavy stock of goods in Glasgow of the most current kinds, which he sold on his own private account; and, on the whole, his hands were very full. I had dealt with him from the first, and my connexion with him was growing yearly greater. While on a journey at this time, he said to me, 'By-the-by, James, that was an ugly bill you paid Mr Ashmore with—nine months, man! It had such a bad look he could not get it discounted.'

A little angry, I said, 'How came you to know about it?'

'Why, Ashmore could not get it discounted, and I did it for him.'

I explained the circumstance to him, and he said I was perfectly right.

'But,' he said, looking as if interested in my affairs, 'are you sometimes pushed for money?'

'Yes, often; but I always get through.'

'And would you be the better if you had a hundred pounds, or say two hundred, more in your business?'

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I added, 'I have always too
I will see you again to-morrow.'
ready-drawn bill at six months after
one hundred and sixty-six pounds, he
I had accepted this, he said, 'That is for
I will give you the money minus the discount. And
same amount and date, payable at my ware-
I pay it when it is due. You
I could not see the force of his logic at all; or, in fact, I
I was conscious it was both improper and dangerous; but a
his princely look and proud bearing, and you
I found it impossible to connect the idea of danger or disgrace with such
a man in any way.

At this point of my narrative many may feel inclined to say of me:
The man is a fool, a born simpleton; why put off time reading any
more of his stuff? I can only say I am telling the truth as exactly as
I can, and repeat the proverbs, 'Drowning men catch at straws!' and
'Necessity has nae law!' It is dreadfully dangerous to be so poor
and so pushed as I was. From this root sprang a chain of accom-
modation-bills, which lasted without interruption a number of years.
I did not spare Nobleman; I made him run fully as much risk with me
as I did with him; and, at one time, being hard pushed, I made an
errand to Glasgow, and made him find one hundred and sixty pounds
for me on a day's notice. He fidgeted sadly at this, but he found it for
me; and I came home rejoicing as if I had gained some great victory.

Still my trade continued to improve and increase, and during the
three years 1823 to 1825 inclusive, my stock reached as high as five
thousand nine hundred pounds; my sales for the last of these years
being eight thousand five hundred pounds. No doubt the extra high
prices paid for goods considerably enhanced the amount of these sums.
Profits were good too; my credit undoubted; and I certainly was in
the way of making money at that time. I balanced and took stock in
the latter of these years; and I had a balance in my favour of one
thousand one hundred pounds, besides my household furniture, which
cost me above three hundred pounds.

Pleasing anticipations of future prosperity! A few years of this, I thought, would make a man of me for life. Under the influence of a hope that this would prove the case, I made inquiries about the cost of a neat gig and of a firm dapple-gray pony. I had fixed my mind as to the colour of the pony, and the gig was to be olive-green; the harness to have silver-plated mountings. I also amused my leisure hours in planning a cottage, to which I might retire when I had made a competency,—say about ten thousand pounds,—for I was very moderate in my ideas. The cost of my cottage was not to exceed five hundred pounds; I was determined upon this: to be plain, but neat and commodious. Day after day I thought about it, and indulged my propensity of castle-building, with almost as little foundation as Alnaschar with his basket of glass ware, in the *Arabian Nights*! Of course I must have a gig-house and stable; they would add a little more to the cost, but not much! I projected a covered promenade in front of my cottage for walking in in hot or rainy weather, to be supported by light-looking iron pillars painted green. I had shaped out my garden to my mind, and was now busy in making up a list of favourite plants. These and other little appendages to my plans were continually revolving like the spokes of a wheel through my mind, and they created quite a pleasing dreamland in my thoughts. The spot of ground I was to build upon was nearly as well fixed as if it had been purchased. I now gave up consideration of these things until I should return from London, which I had been induced to resolve on visiting by pressing invitations from our esteemed friend, now Mr James Cautious, the active partner of the well-known firm of Goodman and Strong, a large established house, but of which now there only remained one partner; and as he was rather a timid man, James, who was a cool-headed, clear-minded, decided character, in a very quiet way became absolutely necessary to him.

My good friend, Mr James Cautious, I found in a novel situation. He had been married only three months before. The narrative runs thus:—He had lodged with a Yorkshire couple from the time of his coming to London, where he gradually increased his weekly payment for his apartment alone from five to ten shillings. He was then only a lodger. The husband had been a coachman, and now was porter to Goodman and Strong, where he had been for several years ere Mr Cautious came up to London. The mother had been a cook; and was an excellent one still, so James said; and I experienced it to be

true. Their family were three boys and a girl. The old people, as James said, had no tact or management with the boys; it was a state of war between parents and children—the boys evading and disobeying the parents, and the father and mother using to chastise them without mercy; and so they grew up wild London street boys, quick to baffle, deceive, and defy not only their poor parents, but the public. The girl was twelve years of age when Mr Cautious went upon recommendation to lodge with them. By-and-by he took some interest in the girl's education, and showed her mother how ignorant she was in correct reading, and how indifferently she wrote. The poor woman was grateful; and the girl became almost a pupil of Mr Cautious, learning of him what she never would have, I think, learnt of another, for she had all the spirit of the lads in regard to disobedience; and many and many a time, when she had, by her idleness, evasions, and provoking replies, enraged her mother, so that she would have infallibly got a sound beating, she would cry on Mr Cautious to protect her; would say she had been naughty, but if mother would not beat her she would take better care; and all the while she was making faces behind their backs. She became very fond of Cautious; and, as a necessary consequence, restrained herself in his presence, and could even be really fascinating. She had eyes dark and sparkling, that seemed to me too bold; but I am anticipating. She was of the middle size, exceedingly handsome, vigorous, and elastic; a lady-like pale face, great taste in dress, and, but for these eyes—these wild restless eyes—would have passed for a fine lady.

Time wore on. She was devotedly fond of my friend, and showed it by a thousand actions. The mother consulted him about everything, even of her own, and the family matters as well. The daughter became, as far as personal attractions went, a fine young woman. James could not avoid making her little presents, for common civility required it. He could also take her and her mother or one of her brothers to places of entertainment; and in return she would watch for an opportunity of brushing his coat or hat, and express herself so unfeignedly sorry when he was absent for a time, or had been unwell, that she became quite a necessary of life to him as he was to her; and both were over head and ears in love with each other ere they had any proper idea of it. I have no doubt that the keen-sighted old woman saw it. As for old Jarvey, he had no observation about him in that way: he would work his day's work, and supper his horse, smoke his

pipe out, and take off his quantum of beer too, and sleep by the fire-side or in his bed with any man. Mr Cautious was now a man of twenty-eight years, and the young lass was nineteen. Still she would be brushing his coat or even adjusting his neck-tie; and somehow or other they walked out very frequently. She was at the dressmaking: he had frequently opportunities of seeing her home, wherein he thought he was doing a kind action, seeing that none of her brothers would take so much trouble, and that it was almost requisite for a female to be protected at the hours of nine and ten o'clock in London.

So matters went on. Whether it was management or accident I do not know; but some one set the ball a-rolling, that Mr Cautious would never think of such a thing as marrying Miss Jarvey. Well, this threw a gloom, real or pretended, over both mother and daughter; then he was quick enough to see that something was amiss, and he compelled the young lady to tell him. She accordingly rehearsed the ill-natured gossip of her work-fellows. Whereupon James became very grave, and did not say anything but exclaim against tale-bearers and busybodies. This was not exactly what the mistress or daughter wished, and they looked very mournful-like. At last the mother broke silence, and hinted how her daughter was annoyed by the school and work-room girls, teasing her about walking with a gentleman who was making game of her. This touched him to the quick: he merely said, 'Time will try;' and adopting a cockneyism, he told me he added, 'those who live longest will see most.' The young folks had their walks and their talks; and as Miss Jarvey was highly romantic in her notions, it so came about that they were resolved to astonish the old folks, and show them how much they had been mistaken. They therefore got the forms all complied with, and the money paid, and were out and off one morning—nobody knew where—but they returned in time for dinner; and James introduced Miss Jarvey as 'My wife, Mrs Cautious!' Dinner followed in half an hour, ordered from a tavern hard by; and this was James Cautious's marriage, just three months before my visit.

He was quite vain about his wife; and I could find no fault with her. She used to walk about with me, and was full of cockney talk; quick and clever, with the dark eyes not rested yet; good at dressmaking, and bonnet-making too; very attentive to me. I was informed that she was to be down into Scotland to see all James's friends soon; and of course, as I was living with him, I could do no less than ask them

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to live with me, for James's parents and connexions were in poor dwellings. A faint idea came across my mind, that perhaps James had the more readily pressed on my visit to make way for this return. But he of himself was too good and candid to have ever hatched such a scheme; and I allowed it to drop into the oblivion which I thought it merited.

At the time of my return from London, it was now a season of high prosperity with me. Travellers and principals all contended to do business with me. I was frequently invited to dinner by these parties, and every respect paid me; possibly more than was my due. Had I looked at it then as I look at it now, I would have discovered that it might have been deemed bribery or flattery. And yet I am sure few in our line were better informed, or could enter with more intelligence into general conversation than myself; and I gradually came to feel at home with them, and to believe that I was advancing fast to the rank of a man of importance in society. Oh! these were the palmy days of our prosperity, when I dined with Nobleman, and listened delightedly to his compliments addressed to my weak points, yet with nothing like flattery; then at breakfast with me in return, he would praise me to my wife, and my wife to me, for she was truly a great favourite with Nobleman. Nor let any one for a moment suppose that this was done in hypocrisy by our friend, for he was Mr Greatheart, if ever there was one—a heart running over with hope and love and joyful anticipations of the future: an educated gentleman, too, if ever one lived. His language was so fascinating, so generous, so full of peace to all mankind, that no wonder I was won by it. When he suited the action to the word, and threw his honest soul into his speech, he bore down all before him. How I loved that man! The long discourses I used to have with him on priestcraft, the immortality of the soul, the eurrency, the national debt; contrasts of English and Scotch manners, the Established and Voluntary churches; on Brougham, Lord John Russell, Dan O'Connell, and Joseph Hume!

At one time, when we were discussing the subject of the national debt, which he always contended would ruin the British Empire—'But the national debt,' said I, 'is not increasing, it is diminishing every year, and since the battle of Waterloo has been diminished one-third. We do not owe so much now as we owed in 1815 by three hundred millions.'

'How? What? What nonsense are you driving at? Surely you know better than what you say. You are dealing in riddles.'

'No,' I said; 'I will put it before you in a moment. Our debt is dangerous to us, chiefly when we seem unable to pay it. Is it not so?'

'Granted.'

'Well, if you calculate the vast increase of national wealth since 1815 in shipping, manufactories, the great increase of our cities, the augmented value of our land, and all the rest, you will surely allow that for every pound of national revenue at the former period, we are able to bear now easily at least thirty shillings.'

He was struck by this, and, after a pause, said—

'Well, that's a new view to me. I don't know that I can upset that. I will think over it, and write you.'

Was I not a proud man? On another occasion, in discussing with the utmost fervour the arguments for the immortality of the soul,—a subject which has always engrossed the minds of the greatest of men,—I ventured to express myself warmly: 'No, no, my dear sir; God would not have given us capacity to conceive such a thought; He would not have made it so very dear to us that "longing after immortality," had He not meant to have gratified it, and, like His glorious self, outdone our fondest anticipations in that other and better world awaiting us.'

'You have been reading Brougham's book; these are exactly his sentiments.'

'I am glad to hear it,' said I; 'but I did not know that Brougham had written a book on that subject; and I am sure my sentiments are my own as much as Brougham's are his, for they are the slow, careful elaborations of my own mind in every respect; for,' said I, 'do you know that I have not sought but shunned books on these subjects? I did not want to know what other men thought; I did not want to fill my mind with transplanted ideas; I wished my own to expand, and come to fruit and maturity within my own breast; for God has given to me as well an organized mind for thinking as to any other. To be sure this is a slow way; but it is the way I have chosen.'

Nobleman was very popular in Glasgow, and bore no mean part in the organization of that city for supporting Lord John Russell's Reform Bill. He went rather beyond me in Radicalism; and always when he had his mind overcharged would inflict a three-page epistle upon me, which I was happy to answer, whereby the ideas of both were no doubt improved. No man on earth would more heartily take up the cause of any unfortunate man, or widow and family: he would

rush into the conflict ; and whether it was votes or five-pound notes, would carry his point, leaving his friends to marvel at his ardour. As a popular speaker, his warmth moved those on whom better arguments were lost. He was twice married. His first wife was an Irish lady, who left him with two boys and two girls. He was fortunate in marrying next one of the best of women—a lady of an excellent family in Glasgow. She adopted the children as her own ; and Nobleman was not insensible of this rare merit, the more by token that she had six of her own, forming a family of a round dozen ; and, as he used to say with tears in his eyes, no man on earth had a happier home than he had. He had, however, plenty of enemies, who hated him for his success, and for the bad example he set to those in the same trade by indulgence in credit and renewals, which no regular well-constituted house would do. It was the worst and the poorest that required the heaviest indulgences ; and it was said of him that he was a nobleman at bankruptcies. He could do twice the amount of business of any man on the road, he had such a way with him. But there were three or four houses in Edinburgh who set their faces against him, because he would do business in the north, and as far as Aberdeen, which they thought was travelling out of his proper sphere, and interrupting their lawful trade. Such was my friend Tom Nobleman. But indeed I had now many friends.

It is long since I wrote Mrs Winterman's name, but now it comes up again. Animosity and ill-feeling had died away for want of food or fuel to keep them alive. It cannot be supposed but that both she and my wife would have yearnings towards each other. We were calculated not to fall out of her notice. There were none more respected than we were ; no better dressed lady than my wife ; no more neat and clean children went out to walk than ours. Again and again had Mrs Winterman met the maids and our children, and shown tenderness ; and this went direct to Eliza's heart. She hesitated to tell me, but at last she did ; and oh, how joyfully in my forgivingness did I give her leave to ask her to come and see her ! ' We can afford it now, Eliza, to let her see and feel that we can forget and forgive. You know how happy we have been since we dropt her out of our list of friends, and seeing her will make no difference *now* ? ' I appealed by a look to Eliza.

' Oh no,' she said ; ' she never can be as she has been to me,'—the *never* slowly repeated. ' But it is my duty. And I long so much to see the advocate.'

And so did I; for he was a fine, gentlemanly, thriving fellow, respected very much in his profession. I omitted at the proper date to notice old Mr Winterman's death. I was asked to the funeral, but not to the house. It was only one year after our deadly breach, and the wound was still green and rankling. Charles was young then. Seeing him affected as the clods fell on the coffin of his aged father, I went round to him, and put my hand kindly on his arm. He shrank away from me, no doubt under the influence of his mother's story. But all that passed away. We had all cooled thoroughly down now. Our renewed acquaintance with them was quiet and guarded. Once when Eliza had a heavy cold, Mrs Winterman offered to make some little thing for her; but she was met by the remark—

'Mrs Liverpool will be here in an hour, and she will make it for me; she takes such a charge of me;' and Eliza added, that when Mrs Winterman was adjusting her bed-clothes, she was afraid her hand might touch her. I just shrank from it. No, no, she can never be to me as she has been—*never!*'

Mrs Winterman, therefore, could find no opening. And we remained in that quiet and distant relation; but had Charles and his mother when we saw our other friends.

For two or three years about this period all was sunshine in our public and private life. The smiles of the world; good general health; undoubted credit; the endearments of a young family rising around us; the countenance of our friends—Mr and Mrs Liverpool, Mrs Councillor Plausible, and occasionally the Councillor himself, the Bridgewaters and the Withers family, my uncle and Helen, Charles and his mother. These were our intimates, but we had a dozen more of the formal kind, with whom we went no further than exchanging civilities.

Eliza was a devoted mother, and nursed all her little ones. The least noise over night would startle her, and in a moment she would be out of bed, and across the lobby into the nursery to see if all was right there. I often thought she must have injured herself by these sudden exposures to cold. Generally speaking, we were fortunate in our maid-servants: they were well looked after and kindly treated, and we had many of them who were useful acquaintances in after life; for a humble friend is sometimes a very useful one, and can do many kind offices for you. We corresponded with our good friends at Artoshlie at least once a year; and there were, besides, little inter-

changes of small presents. Twice had we Mr Faithful for our guest in the time of the Assembly sitting. Sometimes a visit from Walter Vainman. He and I having met Mr Bluff by concert, we had a grand rompus as usual. This visit of Mr Bluff and Walter produced a singular event.

I have described at the proper place how Mr Bluff was crossed in love by the management of old Crafty. Well, he used to look upon himself as a solitary and unfortunate creature, whose fate was sealed; and to describe his timidity in regard to other ladies whom he occasionally met, as quite unfitting him from making any advances. There are not a few men of this sort who almost require to be courted; and perhaps they often are by the ladies, who see their weakness, and with but little trouble carry them off as their prize, for pity's sake of course! Mr Bluff was one of those timid gentlemen. On occasion of this meeting we had a little party; and Walter's sister, who kept her uncle the clergyman's house, was asked. She was a frank, buxom lady, and Mr Bluff was smitten. He several times remarked to me afterwards what a nice lass she was! There was a considerable parity of ages between them, both being on the respectable side of thirty years, perhaps not far from forty. Walter must have noticed what Mr Bluff said as to his sister; but he had an innate dislike of Mr Bluff, because he was such a plain, homely, unpolished fellow. Now Walter might have been called Mr Varnish, he was so fond of exterior impressiveness, and such a master of manners in his own opinion, although he egregiously overdid it. So he sulked at our advances on this point, and said nothing: 'could not say,—did not know.' However, we learnt as a fact that his sister was to spend the month of September at his house in Dumfries, while her uncle made a tour to the Continent. Mr Bluff and I consulted about this; and I remembered that Walter had invited me and my wife to come and stay a week with him. It was impossible for her to go, owing to her own family arrangements; but Mr Bluff and I resolved on an equestrian expedition early in September, for the covert if not avowed purpose of seeing if this buxom lady of forty could not be converted into a very respectable matron, under the title of Mrs Bluff.

This plan was carried into effect; and so well did we hit the time, that the hostler was grooming down my horse in the stable when our Glasgow magistrate made his appearance on a sturdy gray, remarkably *well dressed*, and looking bright. After putting ourselves in order we

went to Walter's. Most fortunately we found him at home, and in the height of a shopkeeper's glory—taking in goods. With what joyful anticipations he examines the goods, admires the quality, fixes the price, putting on a good handsome profit; and in the middle of his full enjoyment we two substantial shadows stood before him! A stare of unmitigated surprise was followed by a look of fear or perplexity, and then a sort of frown and a look,—a comical look of anger,—as he exclaimed: 'Gentlemen, surely you have given me a start! What on earth!—how blows the wind, that I have the pleasure of seeing you in Dumfries?' We hastened to propitiate the great man by telling him that business and a little management had brought us down together upon him, to see what like he was when at home. At the same time we told him we had ordered our beds at the inn, and would leave again to-morrow.

'Oh, that be blowed!' said Walter, but greatly relieved. 'You shan't stir from this so soon as all that. You say you are on horse-back? I will get a nag too, and we shall have a circuit of twenty miles between breakfast and dinner over the finest ground in the world. You dine with me to-morrow, and breakfast too. In the meantime, come away and get tea.'

And away we hied, and went pop in on the very parties we came to see, engaged in Walter's nursery of

'Olive plants about the table round!'

His wife, and sister, and ourselves three made a nice little company. Mr Bluff made such advances to the lady as his modest and timid nature permitted, and his hopes were high of coming good speed on the morrow.

We breakfasted together in fine spirits. Our horses were ordered at ten o'clock. Meanwhile I got Walter by himself, and told him our real errand. He looked blank, and exclaimed, 'I am so vexed! my sister was engaged to an Edinburgh gentleman a month ago. Had Mr Bluff mentioned this when in Edinburgh last, it might have been different; but I do not know; yet I suspect all is now settled.' To be sure I desired him to ask his wife, which he did; and they both saw the sister face to face, for fear of any mistake; but there was none, it was all settled, and Mr Bluff had no chance. This I communicated to Mr Bluff; he was very sad. 'The sooner I am out here,' said he, 'the better.' I told him we had promised to stay dinner. 'I cannot

keep that,' he said; 'I've got my dinner already. I'll leave in half an hour; but you needn't mind me.' I hurried to Walter and told him I could not forsake Mr Bluff in his trouble; and away we went in this abrupt way. We rode one stage and dined, and rode another to supper. I did all I could to cheer him up, but in vain. He was very low, and oftentimes could give me no answer; his whip trailing on the ground; his horse infected, and careless and stumbling. This aroused him to give the horse a beating, and then he was angry at himself. He would say, 'Am I not an unfortunate wretch—a solitary creature? I feel like an outcast. Nobody cares for me. When I see your and Walter's happy homes, I cannot tell you what I feel. Oh that wicked old Crafty, who cut me out of —, and married that sweet lassie to old Scorbutic, fit to be her father!' Here he swore. 'And Walter's sister seemed such a nice frank lass, and much about my own age! What need I care for making money! I've naeboddy to leave it to that cares for me. But my fate is sealed; I just feel sure that I'll gae down the hill now! I dare say I'm gaun that way already.' It was in vain that I told him there were as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it; all was in vain; he had lost hope. I parted from him with a very sad heart. It was almost like a final parting. I fear he sank gradually, as he seemed himself to fear he would.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A PANIC.

I AM now arrived at the period of the memorable panic, as it was called, in the end of 1825; and I had a great deal to do with it. I had heard a good many reports about the failure of London bankers, but it never occurred to me that we in Scotland had anything to do with it, or any chance to feel its consequences. I was quickly undeceived. When I had bills current past me, I was in the habit of sending them to my banker any day of the week, and passing a cheque at same time for such a sum as I then wanted, never exceeding two-thirds of the amount of such bills, which were afterwards discounted at the regular times. Well, I sent my clerk to the bank with a bill of very fair

character for ninety-one pounds, and a cheque for sixty pounds; he returned almost immediately: 'The manager cannot do this at present.'

I wrote a note: 'If I had been aware of any obstacle to our former mode of doing business, I would have prepared myself otherwise; but having a bill due to-day, and now no time to procure money elsewhere, I trust you will have the goodness to honour the cheque sent.'

'Sorry we cannot accommodate Mr Meetwell to-day.'

I was astounded! looked what cash I had in the shop, clapped on my hat, and went out, without knowing where I was going, for my time was almost gone. Fortunately, I met a customer who had thirty pounds past him. This I got; and with seven pounds and twelve pounds from other two friends, made out for that day. Three days afterwards, I presented the ninety-one pounds bill, and another for forty-four pounds for discount.

'It was not convenient.'

'This,' said I to myself, 'beats all.'

I stepped up to the clerk again and asked him, 'How is this?'

'Oh!' said he, 'you are not singular to-day.'

I came away, musing upon his answer; but it was not long ere I understood it. The stoppage of discounts became almost universal. This roused me indeed—me who could not do a week, nor half a week, without discounts all the year round. What was I to do? I had one resource. My New-year's accounts were nearly due. I anticipated the time ten days, and set myself to collect them with the utmost assiduity. The best of them were paid me at once, and enabled me to go on clearly for some weeks. Meantime a dark gloom had overspread the face of the commercial world. Our citizens were to be seen in the newsrooms, and upon the streets in groups, day after day, inquiring who else had failed by the last accounts. Buying and selling was almost at a stand. But I continued collecting with might and main; and as I now experienced considerable difficulty in raising those sums due to me remaining unpaid, I wrote three sorts of notes, at intervals of a fortnight, urging my necessity, and apologizing with all humility for pressing so hard, on the ground that I could not help it; but at the same time, I named the day upon which I required the money. By these means I got up far better what was due to me than those did who allowed their accounts to lie over till a later period, when the distress had become universal, and every one felt the pres-

sure. During the months of January or February I managed to pay all my acceptances in good time.

I had, however, a heavy day coming,—one bill of three hundred and sixteen pounds, and another of one hundred and forty-seven pounds, both payable in one day, in the same bank office, the 4th March. My last payment had been ten days previous; and I was as busy as man could be during the interval preparing myself. I had never been beaten yet; and I pushed on, principally raising small sums due me and borrowing, till on the day of payment I had mustered within one hundred pounds of the sum required. By draining all my minor resources, such as neighbours and friends who only could give me small sums, I came within fifty pounds. In this state I met John Garth, and I urged him to try to borrow the sum required for me if possible. He had no money at his command, but requested me to go with him to the house of a celebrated tavern-keeper, from whom he felt confident we would get what we wanted. We were unsuccessful, and lost half an hour besides. Garth went off to try another friend, and I took to the street, resolved to apply unceremoniously to all I met who were known to me. In this state of mind I observed my highly respected acquaintance, Mr Dartman, in his door. From him I obtained a loan of twenty pounds; Garth at the same time returned with twenty pounds more, and the balance I picked up on my way to the bank. I was hardly in time, but I got in. My money was in bunches, knots and wisps, with silver and gold besides in different parcels, and it took the teller a long time to count it over; but it was all right. By this time no one of the public remained in the office except myself; and the teller, who was an acquaintance, said to me, with a knowing smile, 'I was doubtful if you would come; I see you have been working hard.' I departed with my bills, very tired, but well pleased with myself, and went home to my dinner rejoicing.

This was my exhausting effort. The next bill I had for one hundred and two pounds to a much esteemed and valuable connexion, at the head of which was a pretty old gentleman, whom I had been in company with. I wrote him how ill-off we were; that our ready-money trade was cut off for the time, our discounts quite narrowed; and I sent him my acceptance payable in London for sixty pounds, for which I begged him to send me the money; being determined to keep all right if in my power in this instance to do it. He answered me, that notwithstanding the strangeness of the demand, he had complied

with it, having confidence in me; that he was aware the present times were trying, but it was utterly against their rule to do anything of this nature, and he hoped I never would make another application of the sort.

My March journey was now due, and I never had more occasion to travel and collect money, for I was surrounded on all sides by claims for repayment of borrowed cash, or by my own customers urging me to take up their acceptances; besides, I had my own proper bills coming due early in April to a great amount. The day before I left home I called upon the gentleman who lent me the twenty pounds on the 4th March. It was to tell him that I had left orders with my clerk to hand him his twenty pounds from first remittance I made home. He was quite pleasant. Being an intimate acquaintance of my friend Nobleman, he asked, in chatting, with a peculiar air—

‘Any news from Glasgow lately?’—fixing his eyes upon me with a look of such meaning as sent a cold shiver to my heart.

I said I had heard of none; but the words were faint, and almost inaudible.

‘No news from your friend Nobleman?’

I answered, ‘None of late.’

‘Well, well,’ said he, ‘I wish we may not all hear of him too soon.’

‘What!’ said I, ‘do tell me candidly all you have heard about him.’

‘Oh, nothing particular, I assure you; only that he has his own share of the troubles of the present time. Nothing else, I assure you.’

But he had done his worst. He had fixed a barbed arrow in my breast which pained me exceedingly. I could not pull it out. My heart palpitated, and my breathing was confined and oppressed. I flew to my desk: ‘Mr Thomas Nobleman. My dear sir,—I write you at this time under the most painful excitement. A friend of yours and mine has hinted to me that you are in trouble. I think he means more than he says; and I know he has made me very miserable. Do, for God’s sake, write me immediately, and send me comfort if you can; but write me, I entreat you, for I am very unhappy. This is written under great agitation. If anything is wrong, pray excuse me. Do write soon. I go from home to-morrow; but your letter will be forwarded to me immediately. I have left orders to that effect.’

I was now but in very poor trim to comfort Eliza previous to my leaving home on the following morning. I did not mean to tell her all

my fears, but they would not hide. She exclaimed when she saw me, 'Oh, James, what is the matter?' I tried to evade a discussion; but 'Do not trifle with me, James; you have either heard very bad news, or else you are unwell. I never saw you so pale and disturbed-like in my life.'

I answered, 'I have been in Mr Dartman's shop, and he has been hinting mischief about our friend Mr Nobleman; but I believe it is done maliciously to vex me, because he knows I have large dealings with him, and because he has nothing to trouble himself; and so he enjoys the distresses of others from malignant feelings.'

'Ah! if Mr Dartman says so, it is too true; and if it should be true, how would it affect you?'

I answered, I would lose considerably by him; but I would be able to bear it, I thought.

'Are you quite sure of this?' said she.

I assured her upon my sincerity.

She drew a long breath, and seemed relieved: 'I am so glad to hear it; but you have a great deal to do, I am afraid.'

We parted thus. I had about two hundred and fifty pounds to get in Kirkcaldy. I got it nearly all in bills. The banker there, who had never before refused me anything, told me he could not discount for me at present. It was no use to say any more, or try any other; so I carried them on with me. I only got half of my accounts in Dundee in bills; the other half in cash. In Arbroath, not a shilling in cash; all bills together. This town was in a very dejected state—the worst on my journey. I got my Dundee bills discounted in the place, and sent home my first remittance. All the rest of my journey,—Aberdeen and north of it,—I found much as usual; and as I had made a second remittance home, my nervous fears began to give way. My spirits rose nicely again; and I came to set down Mr Dartman as an officious person. I did not push off goods on this journey. I felt I must walk wisely now for a time. In commercial rooms, where I had been for the last ten days, failures were the paramount topic; and as there was no word of 'Nobleman of Glasgow,' I set it down that he was swimming through. I reached Inverness on a Saturday afternoon, meaning to spend the Sunday there. Among my customers were two pleasant and good families; and I went to church either with the one or other, being always in that place on the Sabbath. I had divested myself of my upper garments, and had got tea before me, and was

slicing away at a piece of beef; no one in the room but one dark-looking reserved young gentleman, with whom I had exchanged salutations on entering; but I was busy, and he was abstracted. 'Is that for you, sir?' said the waiter, laying a coach parcel before me. I said it was. The sight of it awakened my fears. I finished my tea most deliberately, and ordered the things away, protracting till the very last moment the opening of the parcel; and at last I summoned courage, and cut it open. There were a number of letters, and amongst them a thick one from Nobleman. I ran over all the others ere I came to it twice over, to be certain that I had understood clearly their contents. At length, when I could no longer defer my trial, I faced it. I opened the letter. It was closely written. The first line decided the point:—'My dear sir,—The fears expressed in your letter to me of the 9th current I am pained to acknowledge are too well founded. I have sunk under the extraordinary pressure of the times, and have suspended payments.' I need not quote further. The blow was struck.

The remainder of his very long letter I read over and over again; but remembered not a word of it, except that he had the kindness to return me a bill of mine which he had not got discounted,—amount, one hundred and sixty-two pounds fifteen shillings. He also advised me he had paid into my account a sum of thirty pounds to a house which he knew I dealt with. I was much moved by the distress of mind depicted in his letter; but selfishness did away all other feelings for a time. I laid down the letter, covered my face with both my hands, and endeavoured to collect my scattered thoughts. At last, I remembered I was not alone. I looked up; the eyes of my fellow-traveller were fixed upon me with the deepest interest. Conscious of having overstepped the bounds of politeness by staring so hard at me, he forced himself to speak: 'You have got bad news, I fear, sir?'

'Yes,' I said; 'they are but too common just now.'

My other letters were of subordinate interest. I had read them carelessly, put them aside, went out, saw my customers as a first call, and asked my two friends to come and take toddy with me after shop-shut. I wrote some letters in the interim; but did not post them till I should read them over in the morning, for I was distrustful of myself.

My friends came. I told them I had been getting notice of bad

debts, and asked them to play the host, and I would be the guest, as I felt myself annoyed at the prospect of losing money. My friends amused me and themselves tolerably well, till we made it bed-time. Scarcely ever have I in the course of my life known what it was to want sleep. I now experienced it for the first time. So much exercise in the cold open air as I had had that day, joined to the toddy, would, in ordinary circumstances, have procured me a long, sound night's rest. Not so on that night. I tried to sleep, first on one side, and then upon the other. I felt as if a substance like a great ball of fixed air filled up all my breast, and oppressed my breathing. Move it I could not. I tried to relieve it by sighing, but in vain; I could not go deep enough. I awoke every hour; and for weeks after I was affected in the same way all night, never sleeping a wink after four A.M., and during the day I was like one who had stupified himself by morning drams.

My journey upon the whole produced me an average sum of money; and I arrived at home in good health, with the exception I have mentioned. I went first to my warehouse: there were no unfavourable post letters. My confidential clerk came pretty closely up to me and said, after an effort, 'Have you heard, sir, about Nobleman's failure?'

'Oh yes, Charles,' said I; 'you know you sent me a coach parcel to Inverness, and there was a long letter from Mr Nobleman himself, telling me all about it.'

He still stayed by me as if he had more to say; and having by chance a pen in his hand, he kept unconsciously splitting it in pieces against the counter. 'There have been a great number of people inquiring at me how you stood with him—Mr Liverpool, Mr Garth, Mr Dartman, and many others,' said he indignantly, 'who had no business with it.'

'I will tell them all about it myself, Charles. I will lose a good deal of money by him; but it might have been worse.'

My manner reassured him. He had been very ill, poor fellow; and from the surmises and teasing questions of impertinent people in my absence, particularly those in my own line, he had been driven to go and complain to my wife. From her previous conversation with me on this affair, she was able to assure him that I had anticipated it, and was not afraid to face it. However, this interview was not without good points; for, as my wife told me, Charles actually cried from vexation and sorrow, and said he was sure no man wrought harder in

the city than I did; and she added, 'I will like him as long as I live for his faithfulness.' My uncle, too, poor man, feared that I was ruined, and had been in my shop and house every day. In fact, it had been a doleful time with them all. Report had, as usual, magnified my connexion and probable loss with Nobleman to three times the real amount; and many, no doubt, rejoiced in my approaching downfall. It is always so. But then I had the comfort of thinking that as many more would have lamented over it; at least, I flattered myself in this belief.

When I looked at the amount of funds that I had brought home, and compared it with the proper bills I had granted and now coming on, I saw at once I must not attempt to pay in full, but try to get one-half of every bill renewed as it fell due; and by this means, and avoiding purchasing any more goods except what were urgently wanted, I did not think it unreasonable to suppose, that in five or six months I might emerge into clear water again, for my stock of goods was very heavy. This arrangement as to my bills proper I got carried into effect without much trouble; for, considering the regularity of my payments hitherto, and the character I bore, scarcely one of my creditors refused, or if they did, I generally succeeded after my bill was protested, as it relieved the house from the necessity of paying out the money themselves. Another inducement was this: where I owed the same house an open account besides the bill, it was their interest to keep me swimming, and so work out with me; but where there was nothing due to the house but the bills in question, they were the more disposed to push me hard.

My connexion with Thomas Nobleman amounted to one thousand three hundred and ninety pounds, as I said before; for the bill sent me back was one to renew another coming due, so that the gross amount of bills between us was only lessened by the thirty pounds of cash paid in to our credit with our friends T. P. and Sons. Of the above sum, nine hundred pounds was for Nobleman's benefit, and four hundred and sixty pounds was for mine. Ten days after my arrival, I called on my own banker, where my bank credit was, and where also two of Nobleman's drafts on me were. I had done all my business here, till my widely expanding bill connexion had forced me to go elsewhere, to keep them for a time out of his sight. He had also been my uncle's as well as Mr Stately's banker; so that all particulars respecting myself, my estate, and character were well known to him. He

received me kindly, and begged me to be seated. I proceeded immediately to business, by laying a list of my bills with Mr Nobleman before him, saying, I considered it my duty, situated as I was with his bank, to be candid with him; and then I spoke of other details, all which he heard to an end, still looking at my list of obligations with Nobleman.

'Mr Meetwell,' said he, 'I am very sorry to find you have placed yourself in such a situation. Accommodation-bills have been the ruin of many, but you are too severely punished to need any further reproof. What do you mean to do?'

I answered, I had no fear of getting through all my difficulties ultimately, if the bankers who held Nobleman's bills would grant me indulgence, for I had abundance of value to meet every claim; but time would be required to sell my goods, for I must not throw them away. I had not matured my plans; but as soon as I had done so, in two or three days, I would call again.

Mr Nobleman had not been able to get all his bills discounted directly in Glasgow for some time, although he had kept his condition as quiet as he could. The consequence was, that there were on part of our bills other names as indorsers. I considered for some time how I should do, and at last I formed my plan.

I wrote to all the banks who held these six bills in terms exactly similar, stating the amount of my connexion with Mr Nobleman in every particular, and where the bills were; that I had abundance of value in my estate to pay every claim, if I got time; but that if my stock were forced into the market, it would be quite thrown away; and I appealed to my previous character, that my word might be relied on. I therefore begged the bankers to rank the bills on the estates of all parties whose names were on the backs of them, so as to insure dividends from all their estates, because, as acceptor of these bills, I could not do it. As soon as this was done, and within three months, I would pay one-fourth of the amount, and three months after one-fourth more, if necessary. All the parties on said bills were insolvent except myself. The answer to this was short and similar: 'Give us security, and we will accede to your wish.' This it was impossible for me to do; and here the matter was at a standstill, and I remained in a state of great perplexity.

Meantime, one of the bills ran down, and was presented to me for payment; amount, one hundred and ninety-one pounds eleven shillings

and ninepence. It was noted for non-payment. At the time it was noted I again wrote to the bank, renewing my proposals with arguments. I got no answer. The figures, one hundred and ninety-one pounds eleven shillings and ninepence, seemed to meet me everywhere; even in the dark they seemed luminous; go where I would, they followed me; even in the solemn watches of the night, these figures came up; they followed me to the church; they would not be shut out from my sight. A week elapsed, and I began to hope I was to get the time. In whipping round a corner on a hurried errand my name was called—

‘Mr James Meetwell?’

‘Yes.’

‘Well, sir,’ said this half genteel-like person, ‘I am instructed to give you a charge of payment on a bill of yours, to Thomas Nobleman, for one hundred and ninety-one pounds eleven shillings and ninepence to-night, at the instance of the — Bank, Glasgow. If you would prefer receiving it quietly anywhere, I shall attend you as you may appoint; if not, I shall leave it at your house.’

As soon as I could speak, for it was not immediately, I thanked him, and named a tavern where I would be waiting for him exactly at nine o'clock; and I passed on, with a buzzing noise in my ears, a dryness in my throat, and altogether in such a degree of stupidity that I stopped suddenly in the middle of the street to endeavour to remember where I was going previous to meeting with the messenger, but I could not recollect till I returned to the shop to refresh my memory. Affairs were now come to a crisis with me. I was wretchedly bad company for Eliza the whole day; and in reply to her repeated questions, answered that there were times that fits of despondency and almost despair would come over one, neither to be accounted for nor yet got quit of.

I went to the tavern at the hour appointed in the evening, with a friend, as a screen from the landlord, that he might not know I had come on purpose to meet the messenger. We were at the rendezvous fifteen minutes before nine; and after I had been there a short time, I stepped out, and told the landlord if any one asked for me to put him into another room, and let me know. The time seemed very long; it was half-past nine ere I was called out; and I was quite relieved by it, for I was afraid he might have gone to my house. I was ushered into a little room where sat three men—the messenger with his two witnesses. They had porter and ale before them. The messenger

was too well pleased with his situation to hurry his work. It was his last job for the day. He took much time to mend his pen, and talked away about the bad times, although he said they were not bad for him; took a sup of the porter, and proceeded to write. I was desperately uneasy, but durst not complain. The jug was empty, and the concurrents looked meaningly into it, and I ordered more. I asked the messenger to be as quick as he could. I was afraid my friend might weary, and come into the room where we were, and I would not have liked to be caught in such company. At last the charge was written, and carefully read over, and given into my hand, commanding me, within six days, to pay to the said bank the full amount of said bill, under the penalty of pinding or imprisonment. I paid the ale and porter—two shillings and fourpence—slipped a crown into the messenger's hand, and was off.

A bright thought struck me afterwards. I remembered that Mr Meadows held shares in the bank in which this bill I had been charged upon was, and I immediately wrote him candidly how I was situated with Nobleman, and that, if I could find security, and get the banks to rank *all* the bills on Nobleman's estate and that of the indorsers, I might escape almost without loss, as in three of the bills I got the value myself. I dictated a form of an obligation to him, and desired him to copy it in his own hand, and send it to me. I hardly hoped he would do it. The latter clause of the obligation was this: 'And if you consent to act in the way Mr Meetwell has thus requested of you, I will guarantee that he shall pay up and make good to your bank, at the time he specified, any sum remaining to be paid on this bill, not exceeding the sum of ninety-six pounds in all.' Did not my heart swell when, after wearying for his letter, it came at last, and the obligation fairly copied out in his own neat hand, word for word, and not a reproachful term within it! How much these instances of substantial friendship raised my drooping spirits I cannot tell. The moment I set my face into my own parlour I was saluted with, 'Nay, but you have surely good news to give us to-night, if your face be a true tell-tale.' I wrote the bank triumphantly; and if they did not like my terms, to send it back at once. The bank acknowledged receipt of Mr Meadows' guarantee letter, which they said they would hold in the meantime until they should think of it. I felt safe and satisfied.

In the extremity I was placed in, I had written to Mr Bluff, asking him to call upon a bank in Glasgow, and try to induce them to do as

I wished, and be security for one-half of the amount. He lost no time in replying, and said that even for his own father he would not intermeddle, nor give security in connexion with vile accommodation-bills to any man alive. He reproached me sharply for my folly in connecting myself with Nobleman, who, he said, it was well known had been wading for a number of years. This, from my friend Mr Bluff, was not pleasant, but it was a true and just reproach; and, moreover, he was a cautioner in my bank credit for three hundred pounds, and I had to digest it as I best could.

In this same month the two accommodation-bills which I had had so long from John Garth, were renewed by the kindness of my own banker. John was now fast becoming an altered man. He was generally thought to be rich, and was becoming big in his own opinion, lived well, had his brandy in the forenoon, and his punch at night quite freely. He never forgot the favours I had done him when he commenced business, but continued to oblige me as far as lay in his power.

The next of Nobleman's bills which fell due was the largest of the lot, and in a bank at home. Once I had had transactions with a principal personage of this bank, which I was convinced had left a favourable impression on his mind as to my character. Some days after I had sent in my letter, I was sent for to speak with them concerning the matter, and my acquaintance was the person with whom I was closeted at the time. He said the bank would do all in their power to assist me, provided I would give them security. I answered him, explaining how exceedingly I had been put to ere I got the Glasgow bank satisfied, and I had now no hope of getting any one to stand.

My friend fidgeted exceedingly as he again said, 'You must find security, get it where you will; or else you may be assured the bank will at once give your bill to their law-agent as soon as it falls due, and he will tear you to pieces.' At the time he said this, I thought his behaviour strange; for he never turned his face full upon me, and shifted his position every half-minute, walking, sitting, or standing. I was informed after by a gentleman—a mutual acquaintance—that my earnest entreaty at the time, and candid explanation, made his duty in my case very painful to him. In answer, I said I would try to devise some plan by the time the bill was due. On that day I called with my plan.

'I think Mr Dartman is a partner of your bank?'

‘Yes.’

‘Well, then, I will deposit goods with him to the value of one hundred and sixty pounds, lowest prime cost. He can buy the goods out and out from me, but redeemable within six months by myself.’

The banker said it was a good thought if the gentleman referred to was agreeable. He was so; but rather embarrassed me by asking me to make my deposit of the most saleable goods of my stock, and those I was shortest of.

As soon as all was arranged, my two lads, my porter, and myself commenced to pack up seven separate packages, with certified invoices to each, signed by my principal clerk and myself. Such an amount of goods of one hundred and sixty pounds’ value, were, both bulk and weight, of considerable importance. My lads wrought away sad and silent. They could, however, have no fears that I was doing anything improper; for the goods were removed at noonday, and unfortunately for my feelings, a flat four-wheeled furniture stage-waggon was sent to my door. This drew the attention of all; and a little concourse of observers was attracted to what was going on. The gentleman receiver of the pledge had his warehouse for the reception of these goods in sight at the end of the same street. The curious and inquisitive followed; and, having satisfied themselves, saluted my lads and porter now and then with ‘You have got a new trade now; carrying coals to Newcastle don’t yield much profit, eh?’ There is always a sprinkling of these busybodies, to whom it is meat and drink to witness the distress of others.

The gentleman who took the deposit of these goods was a dealer in the same line as myself, consequently a judge of their quality and value.

It is unnecessary to follow particularly my progress in this painful season of embarrassment. Suffice it to say that I, in all and various places, deposited goods to the amount of six hundred and eighty pounds before I could get my arrangements with the holders of Nobleman’s bills carried into effect. Meanwhile, my connexion in Arbroath was almost cut to pieces. I had seven bills returned under protest in one week, and most of the parties became bankrupt. I had about as many from Dundee: but it was not so bad as Arbroath, and recovered itself much sooner. In fact, the commercial world seemed falling to pieces: incessant bad debts; my stock continually falling in value; my trade reduced to one-half; my correspondence a great and disagreeable bur-

den, dunning those who owed me even a five-pound note, and being dunned in return, and bickering about renewals, and acrimonious casting of blame each on the other. Life would have been a burden had I not been in the tread-mill; and I had to go on actively, or get a knock on the head. I had become gradually weaker and more exhausted. I was now but poor company for my friends. There was no elasticity in my mind. I was in general sad and silent, with occasional fits of morose humour. The children were my best enjoyment; and I generally amused myself with them, because, although I spoke nonsense to them in the abstraction of my mind, there was no harm done. Eliza, with her usual good sense, left me alone, and obtruded no disagreeable subjects upon me. But although she behaved thus, she had spirit enough to say on one occasion, that surely I had myself to blame for much of the trouble with which I was overwhelmed. This I was in truth obliged to confess to be in the main true, yet I was hurt at the remark; so difficult is it for any one to bear being told he has done wrong. It is a sign of a truly reflective mind, and there is a degree of magnanimity about it, when a man says openly, I believe I was wrong; I am convinced I was, and will therefore alter my conduct in regard to the matter in hand.

Up to the date of my troubles I had always found it easy to fall asleep, and to sleep soundly as long as my time would permit. Not so now. I used to awaken at four o'clock A.M., and my first thought was, Have I any payments to make to-day? If not, I could turn on my other side, and have another sleep. But this was seldom the case: my busy mind would immediately begin to run over the whole city, and imagine how I could make up such a sum as I had to pay, and scheme and scheme till time to get up. What a sigh of relief was that I gave when I remembered it was Sabbath morning!

Meanwhile, Eliza suffered much from delicate health early in 1826. Many an injudicious friend brought her in stories about my troubles, especially about my connexion with Nobleman. In the spring of this year she had an attack of inflammation, followed by weakness in consequence of bleeding. Still that horrid practice! I am still of opinion more died from excessive bleeding than the disease itself. We therefore thought of a never-failing restorative—country lodgings. My friend had taken a notion of the Christian side, as Fife is sometimes called, and to Fife we went. The lodging we fixed on was the house of a young married couple,—good-natured, honest, plain folks;

both husband and wife full-sized, sonsy people. They gave up to us parlour, bedroom, a sleeping attic for the lass, and the use of their kitchen. Even then this was moderate at fifteen shillings a week, or six pounds for two months. The house was almost a new one, built by Andrew Smith himself, from his savings as a journeyman mason. We were remarkably well pleased. The chief charm of the place in this ever-to-be-remembered parched and dusty summer, was the access to a fine sea-beach, from which our house was a quarter of a mile distant—about two hundred yards above sea-level. There were no grown-up trees to shadow us, and the heat was great, but we managed: we had a shady seat at the west gable for the morning, and the east gable wall for the afternoon; then we brought out chairs to the south front as soon as the sun was off it; and the breeze from the sea never failed us. Oh that summer! that dry, dusty, parched-up summer! when all cattle became lean, all horses were reduced to skeletons; Dutch hay twentypence per stone, and poor *fusionless* stuff it was, from bog-meadow grass. Fortunately our spout never ran dry; it was at the bottom of hills six hundred feet high. A drink of pure cold water that summer was worth something! At first the heat was most oppressive, almost intolerable; but by-and-by we became inured to it, and after a while enjoyed it very much. Day followed day in bright sun and a brilliant atmosphere; no rain, if I remember right, fell after the month of April. Already, in July, all the fields assumed the golden hue of harvest. The lass and children had grand sport bathing every day. Eliza did not palpably improve for the first fortnight; but in the next she was quite like herself again, and was able to walk with me an hour on a stroll. How sweet these seasons of improvement were! We were so thankful! If it was at all in my power, I went over on Saturday, and left again on Monday after breakfast. The remembrance of these happy days fills me with the purest pleasure.

Towards the end of 1827 I began to breathe more freely. All my old bills were paid up, and I had got back into my stock all the goods I had lodged in pledge and security,—not much the better for having lain about in exposed situations so long. And now, although exceedingly poor, I was able to make payment of my bills as they fell due. It was a most delightful duty when I returned Mr Meadows his holograph security letter, which had been sixteen months in the bank's possession. I tried to express my gratitude. How sweet is the friendship which thus stands the chilling blasts of adversity! I am

also sure no one rejoiced in my extrication from my troubles more than Mary Meadows; indeed, I feel assured that if she had thrown cold water on my request, such was the respect paid by her father and mother to her opinion, it would not have been granted. But she was a kind, judicious, and faithful creature, one of my life-long lasting friends. By dint of the most judicious management (I will take credit to myself for that), by watching the progress of events carefully, by writing letters (post-paid of course) full of earnest argument and entreaty, backed up by telling facts, if I could get them, to the holders of Mr Nobleman's bills, I made the best of a bad bargain, and ultimately escaped from that almost fatal connexion with a dead loss of only two hundred and thirty-nine pounds.

I may say here, that I felt no small degree of pride and self-satisfaction in reviewing my generalship, which, by endurance, by patience, by neglecting no point nor any man, had brought me out of the entanglement I was so surrounded with. But I was still so very weak, that anything like boasting was entirely out of the question; and I am not saying too much when I assert that, directly or indirectly, I lost twice the sum above stated by the consequences flowing from my connexion with Nobleman. My credit was shattered and broken to pieces. Amidst all my misfortunes I had contrived to retain the character of an honest and right-meaning man. Well, one who had rather a favourable opinion of me, got a commission for another house in the same line as the house who had shut their books upon me, and he came one day and said he wanted to have a confidential conversation with me as to my state. I said I would answer every question he could ask, and show him every book he would look at—bank-book, bill-book, ledger, etc. He told me that he knew the house of Gripp, Straitlace, and Co. had closed their books against me.

'Now, show me their account.'

I did so. He was a generous sort of fellow, and said—

'You have given them a great deal of money, and are paying it very fairly; they ought to have supported you. If you give me your word of honour that you are sure you do not fear nor yet contemplate bankruptcy, I will take your order for three hundred pounds' value of our goods from the house I represent of Magnus Liberal and Co.; and I will take your acceptance on my next journey, and send you two hundred pounds' worth more,—thus risking five hundred pounds in all with you.'

This was a friend's lift indeed ; and I need not say how thankfully I accepted it.

It was my habit to take stock every year in the end of January. This I had done in 1825, but not since, for in 1826 I was fully occupied as formerly described ; and in 1827, same period, all my bills were lying over, still at sixes and sevens ; and I had so many lots of goods in pledge, as already described, that I could not have done it correctly. But in 1828 I did it with all the care and correctness in my power ; and proceeded to work out my balance with, as I thought, rigorous strictness. The good debts due to me made a very fair appearance, and amounted to a considerable sum. The bad and doubtful debts I had not been in the habit of valuing at all ; leaving the value of them as a guarantee fund for the debts I considered good, and to this I added the value of my stock, all of which put together made a very decent appearance.

Now for the *per contra*. As I went on, I was well pleased for some time to find them so light. By-and-by I began to pant a little, as the *per contra* account mounted up. At last I thought my ledger and memorandum-book endless, and the sums were equal. I fairly sickened, and threw aside the books in despair for three days. Angry at myself for want of moral courage to go to the bottom of the matter, I resumed my task in desperation. I wrote on and on doggedly, and at last my figures showed that I owed nine hundred pounds above all I possessed to meet it. But I flattered myself there must be some mistake ; so I laid the balance-book aside for a day or two, and then at it again. The figures were stubborn ; they gave the same results again and again. I now valued my doubtful debts at ten per cent. ; my household furniture at three hundred and fifty pounds—it had cost me five hundred pounds ; I also valued my shop furniture ; but all the stretching I could practise, I found I was behind. Then the sophistry came to my aid : Oh, but surely your business, now so well made and so carefully gathered by you, is worth five hundred pounds ! This soothed me a little ; but as I felt conscious I was deceiving myself, I felt very dull and spiritless. Insolvent ! How I hated the word. But there was one fact evident to myself, and I could not deny it, that my estate had sunk in value three thousand pounds !

CHAPTER XXIV.

LOOKING UP AND DOWN AGAIN.

WHEN affairs were in this doubtful position with me, I was quite taken by surprise by a visit from Mr Bluff. He was still in low spirits, he said; and as he had to call on a Highland gentleman's factor in our city for payment of a two-year-old account, he would make our house his inn while he stayed; and if he got his money he would make it pay toll. We did all we could to amuse him. He required his forenoon dram, and his two tumblers after dinner, and the same after supper; and although it was evident that his tendencies were towards sottishness, yet he was still rather a good-looking man, and much more polite than formerly. He was still harping on his disappointment. I knew the first lady: she was a governess in Peter Crafty's family, and I had seen her there two or three times. Slightly made, her countenance was thoughtful and pensive in expression; yet she had a fine colour, and a large black eloquent eye, which, the moment it was directed to and observed by any one, immediately interested them in her favour. I, for one, felt so. During the time he remained with us, we got the full particulars from him. He liked to dwell upon the subject, and Eliza heard him so attentively. When all was put together, his story ran thus:—

‘I don't know how it was, that when Mary Mitchell spoke to me, or I to her, there seemed to be a softness in her manner that made my heart beat; and I dare say I was often confused in my answer. I used frequently to look at her when I thought no one saw me; and I often took a far-back corner of the room for the purpose of seeing her as she sat at her needlework, or with the young folks about her. I had no trouble with old Crafty, for he was always poring into some account, or plan, or book. I think Mary at last became sensible of the way I watched for a look of her face; for she frequently turned her eye on me, and then both she and I blushed. I am sure I did at any rate, and did not dare to look at her again for a while. After I had been thus looking at her for about twelve months, I bought a gold locket in the shape of a heart; but I was twice in her company and had not courage to present it. The third time I made it out, although

I do not mind one word I said, for I was quite confused; at any rate, she took it so pleasantly, and thanked me with such a look, that it went through and through me. I was sure from that time she loved me. My heart was at my lips; but you know very well I was always a bashful *cui*f. Besides this, I had only then been partner with Mr Crafty one year, so it hardly became me to be making up so cleverly to Mary, or speaking about marriage. But I will repent it as long as I live. You know Randolph, James, who used to come about Crafty's? They were great cronies, you know; and Randolph was the means of bringing many good connexions to us—that cannot be denied either. Well, he took a fancy to my Mary, or else Mr Crafty had spoken in praise of her to Mr Randolph; for I could not help thinking that Mr Crafty was more for it than Mr Randolph was. However, I thought the thing impossible, and gave myself no trouble, for he was old enough to have been her father; besides, he was a scorbutic, tippling fellow, as his face testified plainly enough. On a Saturday, while dining with Mr Crafty, about a year after I had given Mary the locket, our dinner was over, and our punch also for some time. Mary sat down to fill out the tea. Old Crafty says aloud, as if half in joke—

“By the by, Mr Bluff, was there ever any talk between Mary and you about matrimony?”

‘I was so surprised at the question that I bounced out, “No, sir.”

“I thought not,” said he, with a grin of a laugh.

‘I say, ma'am,’ addressing Eliza, and striking his hand on the table, ‘that answer sealed the doom of my poor Mary. She had in confidence owned to Mr Crafty, when he named Randolph to her, that Mr Bluff and she were attached to each other, thinking that such a confession would put an end to Mr Randolph’s courtship. She had not liked to tell me this, and I do not wonder at that, for it would have looked as if she was hurrying me; and in place of speaking to me privately, as he ought to have done, this was the way the old fox took to upset us. No sooner had I uttered my “No, sir,” than Mary’s cup fell from her hand, and she hurried away from the table, and sent the maid to wipe up the spoiled tea.

‘Her eyes never met mine afterwards—never. My words had been like a sentence of death to her. How angry I was! I could have torn my tongue out; but what did that signify to Mary? She was married to Randolph two months afterwards. It was a complete sacrifice. It was a d—d cruel action of old Crafty’s. However, I was a cowardly,

sneaking fellow ; but I was young, and had not had experience. If I had been in the least prepared for such a trick, I would not have been so easily duped as I was. I never see her now but with pain, she is so broken-spirited like, and so altered. I believe the scoundrel is unkind to her.'

Here he swore again ; he was getting into this habit.

'I could shoot him if I thought he ill-used her, and yet there is little doubt of it ; but what business have I to interfere ? Oh, ma'am, if it had not been for old Crafty's cruel deceit and my own cowardice, I might have had just such a comfortable establishment as James and you have. But that is all past, and is becoming an old story now ; but I'll never forget it—and never forgive the old sinner or myself.'

It must appear from the frankness of our old friend's confession, how much he felt the first blow ; and then the second disappointment of Walter's sister renewed his regret, and threw him into very low spirits indeed. He left us next morning ; and, as I have already hinted, he became careless and hopeless, with no aim in life ; and he was sliding into habits of deep drinking. His tone of conversation was considerably altered ; the swearing and coarse language were new and unpleasant features, which he must have acquired in base or low company. It is my firm belief, that had he married Mary Mitchell about the time I have alluded to, he would have been a happy husband, and she a happy wife. Her superior education would have polished him, and he was well worthy to be polished,—an honest, kind-hearted, faithful fellow, and as sober a man as any in Glasgow when I first knew him, with no craving for strong drink whatever.

My dear wife's health was far from being established. Her complaint in 1829 was a stationary pain in the side. For nearly five weeks she was afflicted with it, and when it left her she was in a state of great weakness and emaciation, having been repeatedly bled with leeches. Change of air—a complete change—was strenuously recommended by our physician ; and by chance a good customer of mine from Perth, a very sensible, friendly man, called upon me, and took his dinner with us. Our friend was struck and affected by my wife's appearance, she was so emaciated, thin, and worn-like. He was a feeling-hearted man, and inquired particularly about her complaint. He said, with a sigh, he had had no little experience himself in the distress of his own family. As to change of air, he said what a pity we were so far from Perth, for he thought that a residence in that quarter would be as complete a change as could be obtained. Eliza was rather taken by

his words and earnest sympathizing manner, and asked him various questions; whereupon he was very eloquent in his praise of the fair city and all belonging to it. The beautiful Tay was all fresh water, and only one-eighth of a mile broad; the walks on the North and South Inches, so shaded by beautiful large trees; the dépôt which was made to contain the French prisoners was so interesting a sight; and the Hill of Kinnoul was itself a beauty. She made up her mind at once to go. He said he was sure his friend the gardener had not let the upper storey of his house, of two good rooms and a bed-closet; and he would give them as much milk as was wanted, and vegetables. Then one pound a week would pay him well. His house was quite out of the city, about half a mile. Our doctor thought it was too far away; but the moment he saw that Eliza had set her heart upon it, he did not thwart her; indeed, she thought she was going to an Elysium of health and happiness. We soon found out that there was a steamboat to Dundee, and another from that place to Perth; and Eliza said she was never sea-sick, and therefore all was quickly settled, with joyful anticipations. She did recover uncommonly fast within the month fixed by the doctor for the delay; and at the end of that period all was arranged for the journey to Perth. I had never heard it famed as a healthy place, but I thought it might do very well,—so far inland, and totally away from the sea air. It was not in my power to go with her; it would have taken me two or three days. She would take all the children with her, although the schools were not yet up. We packed off the whole lot, with no small bulk of luggage. Two maids, four children, and herself, made seven in all. They got beautiful weather. One of my Dundee friends saw them and their luggage transferred from one boat to another, for we had studied every point of the journey. My Perth friend was awaiting them, and was of essential service to them; and the gardener's spring-cart was there, and took them and all their luggage to the spot at once.

On the third day I got a letter written in such good spirits, it did me a world of good. My friend and my friend's wife had been so kind and so attentive; and all were so much pleased with the gardener, his wife, and son, and daughter, and the big Newfoundland dog, on which the juveniles had been riding already. Every succeeding letter corroborated the improvement; until at last she wrote as if she wished I would fix a time for her return, and said I would surely come *and see them home*. This was not exactly my plan, for I wanted

some enjoyment to myself; and I wrote her I would not like her to hurry away from the Hygeia she had found. In truth, I was determined on a bit of pleasure to myself, and was thinking of taking a conveyance all the way, as perhaps we would not get a good and handsome thing in Perth.

In fulfilment of my earnest wish to have a bit of a pleasure jaunt, I left very early on a Thursday morning. I had one day's business in Dundee, and chose to go through Fife. I breakfasted at my inn in Kirkcaldy; stayed two hours in Cupar; and after being twenty-four hours engaged in business in Dundee, drove very leisurely through the Carse of Gowrie to Perth. Perhaps no drive in Scotland is more delightful than this,—the Tay on your left the whole way, first as an estuary of miles in breadth, and at last a sweet river, over which you could sling a stone; the richness of the land, the beauty of the Fife hills in the south, and the Grampians and nearer hills in the north. By the marks I had got in letters received, I went straight to the house, and found all the doors open, with not a creature to be seen. It seemed there was some demonstration of the military, and all were away to it—the mistress, the maids and the children, the gardener's folks and all. It wanted an hour of sunset; everything was very sweet; the gardener's cows were still in the park close by. Yet I was a little annoyed at this universal desertion, and was about to retrace my steps, when up came 'Boatswain,' or 'Bosun' as he was called,—black and white as described. He was the leader of the returning group; and in a moment all was one hubbub of joy! Such a healthy, happy group, well tanned with sun and air! my heart was full of thankfulness and delight.

Next forenoon we had a saunter through the Fair City, which certainly looks tame and poor to citizens of Edinburgh. But the river and the hills extorted our admiration. We called on our worthy friends in the High Street, and thanked them most cordially for all their kindness. Nor were they a little vain of the happy change wrought on my wife's health; the fact was undeniable, for she was there present, looking as well as ever she did in her life. Our friend counselled me as to my excursion into the Highlands; and I resolved to be guided by his advice. We accordingly left after dinner, bound for Blairgowrie, where, my friend informed me, there was a good inn, and that the place itself was considered one of the most picturesque and cheerful localities in Scotland, although of quite a different type

from the somewhat gloomy grandeur of Dunkeld. To those not much accustomed to travelling by gig, there is a most pleasurable feeling in this mode of conveyance;—the scenes passed; the steady pleasant motion; the rush through the air; the action of a good horse able for his work, and obeying the slightest inclination of the driver; in fact, I know of no mode of travelling so agreeable.

Our first impressions of Blairgowrie were disappointing. A considerable proportion of flax-spinning operatives and labouring people were spending their Saturday evening; and from the general tone of all around, we could see that whisky predominated. We did not, therefore, quite so well enjoy our walk. The brilliancy and quiet of the Sunday morning tempted us to rise early and have a stroll, even before our eight o'clock breakfast. From the bridge every feature was charming, especially the Chinese-looking church and tower on the height. No place excels Blairgowrie in a healthy salubrity of atmosphere, or in the beauty of the surrounding scenery,—so say the inhabitants, and I indorse it. Our breakfast was truly enjoyed. We brought to it restored health, good appetite, and thankfulness; and we had excellent trout, ham and egg, with the indispensable honey. There was none of that cold apathy which looks from dish to dish with provoking indifference, so like one gorged to satiety with the good things of this life. No; we look to every part of this Highland breakfast,—excellent tea and pure cream, and all else,—with such a relish and with so often repeated 'a little more and a little more still' of this, that, and the other dainties, that it seemed as if we could never have enough!

We left for Dunkeld at 8.45, and thought we should have been there in an hour and three-quarters, as we were told, the distance being only twelve miles, and so we would have got to church; but we found it quite impossible to skip this bit of most romantic road. There had been two or three hours of refreshing rain over night, and every tree, bush, or grass field looked clean, lively, and fragrant. On our left we had a succession of small lochs; some of them long, shallow, and winding, others round, deep, and capacious. Sometimes we were winding round the margin of one, and again high up upon the hill-side overlooking another. And all this, as it were moving panorama, lay enshrined in the solemn stillness of a Sabbath morning; and surely never did Sabbath appear to me more sanctified and sweet, with the blue smoke arising like incense from the many whitewashed cottages,

not covered with thatch here, but with blue slate, which gave them such a clean look. But what a strange being man is! Even here self was predominant. Was there anything around me like my wife in such health, sitting by my side after so long a separation? Mark my littleness, as I looked on her olive-green silk-velvet pelisse, which, got in 1824, had always been a favourite with me, fitting so well, and so rich and lady-like without being gaudy. At one part of the road she had fallen into deep abstraction. I respected it, for I guessed the subject which employed her mind. At last her eye met mine—

‘I could guess how your mind was employed just now!’

‘Do, then.’

‘In thankfulness.’

‘You are quite right,’ said she; ‘and oh, what cause I have, have I not?’

At no period of her life did she look better than this morning,—renewed health and hope, sunshine and enjoyment.

The stately new mansion-house of his Grace of Athol was in progress; and perhaps I might have seen all that was to be seen about it, or the whole of the policies, but I availed myself of the excuse of the buildings being only in progress, to decline the attempt altogether. I had always a strange plebeian or radical feeling about me, which makes me dislike exceedingly to prowl and peep around the mansions of the great. I cannot bear to go into any place where I am obliged to speak in an undertone, if the ‘gentry are at home;’ where the guide steps stealthily along, warning you to take care and touch nothing; and intimating now and then that he hopes none of the family are in the arbour or in the walks. I cannot bear this. I lose temper and want to be out—out to the common road, where I could meet with and look upon the best of the land as, for the time and place, upon equal terms with myself. No stolen, creeping, peeping visits to gentlemen’s seats for me! Give me a seat by the bank of the rivulet, with a bush of broom as shade from the sun or the wind, as may happen to be necessary; a stroll on the unbounded heath of mountain or moor; or a walk by the sea-shore, whether it be placid and tremulous, or whether it be lashed into foam and fury by the stormy winged wind,—give me one or all of these, as nearly in a state of nature as may be, and, comparatively speaking, I care not for all that the artificial world can give.

Turning north, we went as far as Blair-Athol. On arriving at

Bridge of Tilt Inn, we intimated our intention of staying all night, and our luggage was carried in and disposed of accordingly. Eliza stayed within to prepare tea, while I took a short stroll in the neighbourhood. The appearance of the country about Blair-Athol is such as gives one a feeling of loneliness, as if we were here shut up among bare hills, and excluded from intercourse with the world. Many large hills surround it at a distance; and so few and small were the patches of cultivation spotting the face of the universal dark-brown heath, that it seems quite disproportioned, and oppressive to one's spirits. I was much disappointed to find that here I must employ a guide to show us the policies of Blair-Athol house, the only good sight. We had an excellent meal, as I may call our tea, here; indeed, the fine air makes one so thoroughly in earnest about these matters, that a Southern might with advantage go north for that exquisite relish alone, and without caring for either mountain or ravine. The house of Blair-Athol was then a large, plain, white-washed building, rather of a spiritless and melancholy cast. We admired much the prodigious breadth and height of some larch fir-trees, which tapered gracefully to the top, forming a beautiful object to look at. We rested pleasantly for twenty minutes in the fog harbour or grotto, lined with stones and shells, and admired the artificial cascade opposite. A solitary eagle, in an iron-sparred cage of about nine feet square and as high, was an unpleasant object, sulky-like, with gobbets of flesh, raw and bloody, fastened for him to tear at, and not over cleanly kept. It was no ornament at all. I was somewhat reconciled to the guide. I rather pitied him, because he had so little to show us, and seemed sensible of it.

During our absence from the inn, two gentlemen had arrived, and, on our return, the maid, with many apologies, said she hoped we would be contented to sleep in a closed-in bed in the parlour we were in, the doors of which she opened, assuring us it was as good as the bedroom that we had taken possession of on our arrival, with the understanding that it was to be ours, and accordingly had had all our luggage put into it. Eliza said No. If we had been asked, and a good cause shown, we would have agreed to anything reasonable to accommodate the landlady or others; but we would not give up our bedroom, which was our right. The maid replied, 'The "gentlemen" would be very angry, for they always got that room when they were here.' But Eliza desired her quietly to return our luggage to the

bedroom from which she had taken it out, or else send the landlady. The maid departed; and, after ten minutes' absence, during which we heard a good deal of altercation, she came back, removed our luggage, and brought Eliza the key of the bedroom, as she had desired. We breakfasted at Moulinearn again, and had a good screeed from the far-famed Sandy, as pleasant as ever. We dined at Fisher's Inn, Dunkeld. We stopped three hours here, for Eliza was beginning to feel the effect of so much travelling, and got a good nap. In the meantime I walked out, and, by cautious inquiry, found out two good people, safe to do with, and opened accounts with them. This put me into good spirits, and I had need, for the road to Perth was tame and wearisome.

We found all quite well on our return to Perth; the youngsters wearying sadly for us. Walking next forenoon with Mr and Mrs Woolston, our friends, we visited the *dépôt*, formerly full of French prisoners of war—very interesting. We got into the centre watch-tower, and had a full explanation of every part of the buildings. How thankful we may be that such jails for brave and honest men are no longer seen in our days of peace! Shortly after we left it, we heard a child crying amongst the bushes on the green; again and again we heard it; at last I turned back, and made my way where a little boy of five years of age was lying on the ground, with a ram standing over him. As the boy was getting up, his horned antagonist pushed him playfully over again, and hence the pitiful cries we had heard. The ram was unwilling to retire from such fine amusement, and Mr Woolston, who was a man of considerable strength, caught him by the horns, threw him on his back, and he was glad to scamper off, while I scolded the maid who had the charge of the children. We forwarded the maids and children this same day to Dundee, per the steamboat, with all the luggage, and we followed in the afternoon, for I was most anxious to let Eliza see the beauties of the Carse of Gowrie.

Arriving at Dundee, we rested ourselves and the horse two hours. Our youngest child having cried much at parting from mamma at Perth, Eliza made up her mind to accompany the whole lot by steamer. Meanwhile I was in excellent spirits. In Dunkeld, in Perth, and in Dundee I had done as much business as would pay the whole expenses of the jaunt, gig-hire and room-rent at Perth included; and as soon as I saw them fairly shipped at Dundee by the 'Modern Athens' steamer at 10 A.M., I started off through Fife,

and stopped at Cupar and Kirkcaldy, seeing a customer or two in passing. Although the weather was fine, a stiff breeze of west wind retarded the steamer, and I arrived an hour before them, and was on the pier to receive them all at home again,—a house full of health and happiness.

A different subject now demands attention. My friend John Garth had of late requested of me such a favour as he had done for me, say in truth, probably thirty times, viz., to give him my acceptance for one hundred pounds for his own use. I trembled when he asked it; but how could I refuse? I got him to be content with one for eighty-five pounds. When I granted this bill, I was fully impressed with the conviction that it would not be paid, but renewed and renewed again, as long as it would do. I did not accept to him; I was the drawer and he the acceptor, otherwise it would have been evident our connexion was one of accommodation, for it was natural for him to be in my debt for goods, not me in his. But I was now in a net. How could I say to Garth, Take your bill out of the way, without first saying, I am ready to take my two? and I was not yet ready to do so. I tried to account for his poverty by way of consoling myself. I knew he had bought a large quantity of material. I knew that he had also built a new workshop. He had said to me before now, that he had a sum lying at interest in my banker's; and I the more readily believed this, as every bill of his offered there was discounted without remark, and at once. Nor did I ask him if he had this sum in my banker's hands now. But what weighed heaviest with me,—I could not conceal from myself that Garth was fast becoming a sot. It was now no rare thing to hear it said of him, 'Garth will go to the devil; no man can stand such continued drinking. And then he is never in his shop.' This prophecy was soon fulfilled; he became stupid, crazy, and useless; and in November 1829 his affairs got into irretrievable confusion, and his bills lay over unpaid. I tried to investigate into his affairs, and to find if he could go on. At first I believed he could, and told my banker so. He shook his head; and when I said so publicly to others, I was laughed at. On a further search into his books, I was dismayed to find that many sums of importance which stood there as good debts owing to him had been paid a year before. Now, for the first time, I began to doubt Garth's veracity and honour; and very soon I was forced to conclude that he had been a lying boaster all along.

When I took him to task with a view to ascertain the true state of his affairs, he could do nothing but groan and shake his head: 'God knows, I really cannot tell.' But there was art under this; he was ashamed to tell, and it saved him the trouble of a particular confession of his shame. At length Councillor Plausible got a hold of him, and obtaining his consent, he executed a trust-deed in the Councillor's favour, who was lavish of his promises, and inserted clauses favourable to the bankrupt. I was hearing some of these papers read over, when Garth, taking offence at the frequent repetition of the word 'bankrupt,' got into a passion, and, rising up from his seat, swore at the Councillor, saying he used that d——d ugly word too often, and for the purpose of irritating him; and away he went to get another dram. The Councillor lost no time in realizing Garth's estate, and paid us an interim dividend of five shillings per pound. He entered three lawsuits against doubtful debtors, and after going on with them for an excuse, compromised them quietly. Years wore over, but we never got another penny from Garth's estate. The Councillor never meant we should.

But Garth's bills were by no means all. Every succeeding week, for nine weeks running, I got intimation of fresh bankruptcies, in which I was involved more or less. They were, however, of small individual amounts, yet, with Garth's bills, I had perhaps to redeem discounted paper to the extent of five hundred pounds—a heavy undertaking for a weak man like me. During the struggle I made to keep my day with all my payments, I became again quite exhausted. I was known as 'a borrower.' I might have been called 'the borrower' by way of pre-eminence. I was shunned, in consequence, by many who were formerly cordial with me, who would have gladly lent me, but knowing I could not pay again, kept out of the entanglement. I was so far gone at this time, that a bill of mine for thirty-seven pounds ten shillings falling due, I was unable to pay it. I was obliged to write the holders of it soliciting a renewal. Meantime the drawers had been advised of the dishonour of the bill, and they remitted the amount to the banker with instructions to proceed against me forthwith—a circumstance I did not know of. I was in Cluny's Tavern with a business connexion, and it was towards ten o'clock. Our eldest boy Charles called inquiring for me.

'Mamma wants to see you at home just now.'

'What is the matter, Charles?' I said.

'I do not know;' and he went away.

This made me very anxious. I excused myself to my friend, and went home immediately. Eliza said nothing. She put a paper into my hands; it was a charge on the bill I have just alluded to, which had been given by the officer into her own hand. She considered me as ruined; and all I could say made little impression. She passed a miserable night, and did not fall asleep until four o'clock in the morning; nor did she recover herself for a week.

A circumstance very similar happened in the same bank a month after, the bill being for four times the sum. But I wrote this time. No notice was taken of my letter; but while at supper one night a knock came to our door. I was wanted. It was a charge again. I could not conceal it. I could not palliate it. People were getting tired of me. It would be of no use to describe our house or our state of spirits; they may well be supposed. But as I had hope myself, so I imparted it to others; and as for Eliza, she never reproached me. I fear she reproached herself, and that too bitterly. However, I got time allowed me on these bills also; but I had much less spirit to exert myself than on former occasions, because the very unceremonious way in which I was charged, convinced me that those I dealt with, also the bankers and bank's agent, had lost that feeling of respect and friendship for me which had supported me on all former occasions. I met the agent of the bank—the same Councillor Plausible—after I had arranged for time. He did not know I had got time. He put his arm into mine with an appearance of the greatest goodwill.

'I hope, Mr Meetwell, you do not blame me for charging you on the two bills, for the letters from the drawers of them gave us no discretionary power whatever.'

'Certainly you were right to do your duty; but I think you might have managed to have let me know without sending law officers slap to my door. I was never so treated before by any one; for myself I care not much, but it would have saved Mrs Meetwell much distress of mind.'

'Upon my word, Mr Meetwell, I was from home at the time it happened. Depend upon it I would not have done such a thing. But my clerk did not know you so well as I do, or else he would have sent you a note. But I say now, Mr Meetwell, my dear sir, what do you mean to propose to your creditors? for it must be exceedingly annoying to your feelings to be situated as you are. There are these two

bills you have been charged upon, and another of your own due yesterday. What do you mean to do?’

I answered, that on the bill of Garth's I had got time, and was begun to pay it. That the two I had been charged upon were also arranged; and as for the one due yesterday, it would be paid to-morrow.

‘Umph! But do you know how you stand? Are you sure you can pay?’

I said I knew very well, for I always took stock once a year, and that I had been in a worse situation than this before now, and that I was noways afraid.

‘Well, well, if you mean to pay your bills, it's all right.’ At the same time letting his arm easily out of mine, he walked off rather coldly.

My impression was, and is still, that he had caused me to be charged in this rude way on purpose to terrify me into bankruptcy, and he expected, having the diligence in his hands, to have got the job. His lady, Mrs Plausible, had often hinted to Eliza her wish that I should consult the Councillor, but I knew his character even better than his wife did; and finding me so steadily adverse to him, I am sure he would have come down upon me with his vengeance if he had not been restrained.

CHAPTER XXV.

A CALAMITY.

I HAVE now arrived at the advent of 1830. I had scrambled through the difficulty connected with Garth and others. The accounts due to me at this period kept me comparatively easy and cheerful. Meantime I ought to have taken stock; but, owing to my recent losses, had not courage to do so. In lieu of this, I employed my young men in going over my whole stock of goods, carefully picking out every article which was old-fashioned, out of date, or from any other cause unsaleable. The amount was three hundred and fifty pounds. These I packed up, invoiced, and sent away to a port in the north country to be disposed of by way of ‘cheap sale.’ I had great confidence in the

person I consigned them to, in consequence of his tact and talent for managing these matters well. Every article was marked at the very lowest price, many of them far below first cost. I hoped they might all be sold by the time of my March journey; and if not, I could then resolve whether to knock them off by public roup or not. By this time I had learned what it was to have overstocked myself. On my journey, I ascertained that two orders which I had given a month before were cancelled, because I had not fully settled up my previous account. I was sadly mortified at this, for these two were first-rate houses; and I did not at once know how I could get such goods elsewhere. When I came to inquire as to my cheap sale, from which I had hoped so much, I found, as far as I could guess, that the half of them had been sold by private bargain at my prices, and I hoped I would have no trouble in getting the amount; but here I was mistaken. The salesman was a proud, quiet, gentlemanly sort of man—a notoriously bad payer, as I now learned for the first time. He would talk to me, and keep me in play at long bowls long enough; but the moment I hinted that I wanted some cash—

Oh, it would be better to wait till he got the whole sold; he did not like the idea of partial payment. They had done very well with the goods hitherto; and had good hopes in a month or two of clearing off the remainder, and then they could do the whole up handsomely.

‘I would be glad of one hundred and fifty pounds.’

‘Out of the question.’

‘Or of one hundred pounds.’

No, no; he had given credit of part; and people must be humoured, he always found it answer best.

‘But I *must* have a payment.’

‘Oh, if that’s the case, then you *must* draw on me for seventy-five pounds at the utmost, and at six months’ date.’

With difficulty I got him to accept for seventy-five pounds at four months; and I was given clearly to understand that until that was run down and paid, I must not trouble him for any more money. Here was a fix! My head was in the lion’s mouth, and I was powerless.

I was not very successful in raising money this journey; and as my twenty days drew to a close, I became quite low-spirited. Anticipating better payments, I had been rather liberal in paying away the cash and bills as I received them, and now I was like to go home with almost nothing. I saw clearly that I would not be a week there ere

I would be as much badgered as ever. As I drew nearer and nearer home, the gloom which overspread my mind increased. I thought it exceedingly hard, after I had been knocked about for twenty days, very early and very late, in wind and rain and snow, and, in short, doing all that a healthy, anxious, determined man could do, careless almost of every comfort, going without dinner perhaps for five days a week to save time and expense, and, after all, three hundred pounds short of my journey hopes! I felt so sad! Well, I went to bed late on a Friday night, resolved to be early on the road on the morrow, so as to get home by mid-day. I got up early on Saturday morning, my mind full of anxiety as before,—visions of bills coming due, and calls of repayment of borrowed cash, still forming the burden of my thoughts, and how I was to meet them with the slender means at my command. I had had enough of accommodation-bills. Winterman junior, Nobleman, and Garth, showed me where they led to. But now, suppose I wanted to raise money, how was I to do it? My friends who used to lend me so cheerfully had been so often disappointed, that they had almost entirely turned their backs upon me. Their short answers of refusal were often given before I had ended making my request. All these reflections came crowding one after another upon me.

I was taking a short cut to save a double of five miles. I had gone the same way once before in the fine weather of last autumn. It was only one mile and a half, and chiefly between woods, which made it generally very wet. This morning was frosty, and the middle track was the only one I could move in, while the ice cracked under my wheels, and the dirty water spurted up in all directions. I felt so annoyed. The one time I whipped up my horse to make him go, the next moment I pulled up again to a walk—my only safe pace; for the jolting in the deep ruts was intolerable. My horse, worn out with his journey, was quite spiritless. In a fit of irritation, I gave him a cut or two with the whip; forward he sprang, but down he came with a crash on both knees. On examining him, I found one knee was safe, the other not; there was blood, but I could not see well for the dirt; so I got in again, and continued my walking jog. Why should I hurry home, to meet, perhaps, some traveller waiting to catch me as I came off my journey, or some of my friends to give me a squeeze for borrowed cash? I got sick in mind. I was now only two miles from Charlie Cannyman's hospitable mansion,—an old rich carrier who kept

a second-rate inn, much more noted for comfort than for glare. I will rest there, I thought, and consider well what I am to do.

Charlie was at his morning pipe, which he laid aside at once. 'Preserve me, Mr Meetwell, is this you? I hardly kent you: sic a sight you are, gig and horse an' a! An' ye've been down too! No that muckle ill dune,' looking at the horse's knees, 'but (looking at me anxiously) you're not that weel-like yoursel'. Have you been ailing, sir?' I was a little affected by the picture he thus held up to me of myself, and told him I was very cold; on which he called to Betty to put a match to the parlour fire, before which I was soon seated; and when the cordial warmth had fully overspread my frame, I fell sound asleep—waking up in time, half an hour after, to enjoy one of Charlie's noted breakfasts; after eating which, I felt much more courage. Yet my thoughts got into the very same track again, and I felt a determination, as it were, to think it out. 'Well, I cannot stand this harassing life much longer: indeed, I feel as if I would rather not go home, I am getting so nervous.' What then? As if an apparition had entered the room, the word 'bankrupt' in print rose up before me; and look where I would, it was there, as if it had said, 'You can only get rest under my shadow.' Like poor Garth I hated the word, but it would not depart. 'A broken-down man!' There was misery in the words; but yet I thought there was rest and peace. Oh, said second thoughts, what rest, what peace? Would you hope to effect a composition where perhaps you have sixty creditors, and one-third of them for borrowed money or caution on my bank-credit or over-drawn bills? You would never get their concurrence, and you would never get security; and without security not one would consent. Besides, in even these private windings-up preferences are always extorted, and your settlement is never perfect. I could not face such a labour; and while the negotiations were going on, some one would be sure to charge me, and keep me in continual terror of imprisonment. No, I cannot face it. What then? 'Sequestration?' Let us see; I must have a trustee, and he must be one of the same trade, for he would have great influence with my creditors.

Well, whoever might be my trustee, he would be very generous and gentlemanly with me. It looks so well; and they would not, in the interim, think of shutting up my shop; that's a harsh measure. But my business books must be carried out of my own into my trustee's office. I must go there in humble attendance for orders every day,

and twice and three times a day if necessary; and all my customers would thus be introduced to my said trustee under the most favourable circumstances, nay, as an interim arrangement, would open accounts with him in the meantime. It is thus quite evident that an honourable trustee in the same line would suck the marrow out of my estate, whilst I was in the shade. Why has he become my trustee? Not for my sake, but for his own advantage; and would I not, if in his place, do the same? Ah! it's of no use to think to make bankruptcy a desirable or agreeable position. It never can, and never ought to be so. Its pains and penalties, which cut deep in every honourable man, may in his case be modified, but they must be felt. Supposing even I got possession of my business again after an interruption of say nine months, I would find it only the shell of what it was; all my friends alienated, all having of necessity formed connexions elsewhere, my ready-money business annihilated,—a poor foundation out of which to raise the promised composition. But to carry a composition settlement is no easy matter; good security must be found for the whole sum offered, and where could I hope to get such security, seeing that all my friends were dipped so deep with me already? and if I failed to get the requisite proportions in number and amount, or if I failed in getting security, all was gone. I would be sold up; Mr Meadows and Mr Bluff would have to pay up my cash account; my uncle beggared and ruined; our household furniture would have to be sold; and my poor Eliza,—oh! I could not think of it at all.

Such were the considerations which pressed heavily on my mind during the last two days of my journey home, and which had come to a climax of misery with me this morning in Charlie Cannyman's. I saw no probable outlet of escape from my harassed state. I had no help but to brace up anew my mind for a harder struggle than any I had yet encountered. So, calling for shaving water, I set to work; shaved carefully, washed away all traces of those tears of anguish and despondency which had forced their way over my cheeks this memorable morning; put on clean linen, and brushed and dressed myself carefully. I then visited Charlie, who had by this time washed my gig, rubbed my poor tired horse down till he shone again, done up the harness, and cleaned the plating quite bright. As if proud of all this, my good horse saluted me with a cheerful neigh.

'Charlie, man, you're a jewel of an hostler!'

'Ay,' said he, 'I meant to send you home like a gentleman. Lord, man, but ye're like anither thing a'thegither since ye got your breakfast and a shave!'

I then told Charlie I would stay a few hours with him. So I returned to the parlour, took out my journey-book, balanced my cash, wrote a number of letters. Then I had dinner; wrote again for another hour or two; then off for home with just as much daylight as would take me there. My horse ran home as lightsome as a lintie on wing, and, handing over my equipage to my friend of the livery stables, I went straight to my house.

I waded once more out of this miry part of my path in life, and began to enjoy quietness and peace. We saw no company now. We contented ourselves with the friendship of Mr and Mrs Liverpool, and three or four more. My wife's friends were all of them ever constant and true to her. As for myself, I was always busy enough, but was rather shunned; for every one who had the least knowledge of me knew I was a borrower.

As the season advanced, and I succeeded in once more establishing my credit, I mustered courage to take stock and make a balance, when, to my no small joy, I found I had not fallen behind since last balance. I was greatly relieved. Our little family was now six in number,—the youngest two months old on the 1st of June,—when I found it absolutely necessary to send them off to the country again. Eliza had mended very slowly, or rather relapsed, and her friends advised her not to nurse her young one; but she would not be persuaded otherwise. It was, however, very sore upon her; and her person was getting still more emaciated. We got an upper flat close by my uncle's; and every day either he or Helen were there helping, as far as lay in their power, to amuse them. It was long ere the country air produced its usual effect upon my wife's health. She did improve considerably by the time they had been ten weeks in it. Yet she was so far from well, that she was not able or inclined to walk alone a quarter of a mile, even with my arm, without wishing to return home. When I found this by repeated trials, I used to slip quietly away with the children to a walk, thinking it better to save her the pain of alluding to the subject. But this vexed her also; for she was hurt by my seeming neglect in not asking her. Her old night-watches haunted her, producing feverishness; on which occasions she frequently arose, if there was any daylight at all, and would sit half-

dressed at an end window which commanded a view of the much-frequented road, and through the panes of which she looked for objects to amuse her, until she had cooled so as to make it desirable to return to bed again. At other times the feverish heat gave way to perspiration. But yet, for all this, I was often surprised to see her, while we were breakfasting at eight o'clock in the hottest mornings of the season, suddenly grow cold, and her lips and finger-nails on these occasions turned blue. It was seldom she could make a good breakfast, although very willing.

Towards the end of August she was considerably better. She had now no particular complaint, except a general debility. She was able for the duties of a nurse. Upon the whole, we were glad to see a change to such an extent; and we hoped she would now mend gradually, until she recovered her ordinary health. During this whole season, there was an alteration in her manner towards me which I could not account for at the time. Previous to this period, she had always been a most anxious inquirer into the state of my affairs, watchful of my every movement; and if things were well with me, it assisted to exhilarate her spirits; if otherwise, to depress them. She used to blame me freely when she thought I had done anything that was wrong; felt happy to commend what I had done to her approbation; and I was not insensible either to the one or the other, for they were generally the result of a quick discernment, and a tolerably sound judgment, even in affairs of business. There was a total absence of a certain warmth of temper which she used to have. No part of my conduct gave her any visible offence or uneasiness; her former sensitive tendencies seemed to be extinguished; she spoke soothingly to me,—for I was very dejected in the early part of the season on account of my difficulties,—and encouraged me with kind words. But although this was pleasant, I would have been far happier if I could have once more seen her eyes sparkling, and her countenance animated with the vigour of health. And, upon the whole, this was a melancholy season with us. Anxious to have the full benefit of the season in the country, the stay of the family was prolonged in it until September, with the effect of a very great amendment upon Eliza. All the rest were quite well; but our youngest was a delicate little thing, the very glare of daylight seeming oppressive to it.

When I went my usual business circuit northwards, it was arranged that they were to come home a week or ten days before my return.

My journey was prosperous upon the whole. I had nothing in particular vexing me. I did enjoy the comparative peace and prosperity; and returned home tolerably well pleased, with renewed hopes of yet rising in the scale of society, of finally overcoming all my losses and difficulties, and even of making a competence. So, with a heart free from apprehension, and even full of pleasing anticipations, I arrived at home. I had my pass-key with me, and opened the door in as quiet a manner as possible, meaning to give them all an agreeable surprise, as I was not expected ere next day. I stood in the lobby, and when in the act of shutting the door softly behind me, I heard our infant child crying, and a strange woman's voice trying to hush it to quiet. This sound came from the nursery. As I stood fixed to the spot, considering what had taken place, another sound from our own bedroom fixed my painful attention. It was of one in the act of coughing a long, tedious, feeble cough. It was mamma in bed. I opened the bedroom door, and my hand received hers, which was warm and feverish; and when I looked at her, and saw her so considerably altered in appearance, I was mute for a little, while she drew the bed-clothes over her face. 'What has happened, Eliza?' I got no answer for some time, she was so much agitated by my sudden appearance, and the long fit of coughing which she had had. That day week she had removed to the town. She thought she had taken rather too much fatigue in packing the furniture for removal, for in the evening she was seized with such a pain in her side that she was not able to sit up, and had to send for the doctor immediately. When he came, he was surprised to learn that she was still nursing her child. This he ordered her to give up; and knowing of a woman who had plenty of nourishment for her own and our weakly thing, she was sent for at once, and our little one knew no change. But the mother was not so soon relieved. She asked the doctor to bleed her, and got for answer that she had no blood to spare; but he applied a blister, which had risen well, and on the third day the pain was gone, but not the cough. It had afflicted her slightly before I left home, and had now increased so much, that it was very sore upon her at times; and, besides this, she perspired considerably every night on going to bed, or some time before morning. This was the sum and substance of the melancholy change which had taken place in my absence; and the relation of it made me very sad indeed, but I felt no alarm. I anticipated no danger, because I had on former occasions seen Eliza

afflicted with similar complaints, on her recovery from the attacks of inflammation.

The doctor was not in regular attendance; and it was two days after my arrival before I saw him. I asked how he considered Eliza was now. I have since thought that I asked this question in too easy a way, for he replied with more gravity than usual, and in a formal and pointed manner: 'I am sorry to say that Mrs Meetwell's health is in a very precarious state: the symptoms are of an alarming nature!' I looked at him with astonishment and dismay, for I had not fully comprehended him; but his look was fixed, and I no longer misunderstood him. After a pause, I said, 'Be sure you look up this evening as if by chance;' and I then turned away. Here was indeed something new for me to meditate upon. The doctor's terribly expressive look I can never forget. At dinner-time she was so well and so cheerful-like that my fears began to vanish. She, in her own warm-hearted and grateful way, attributed the favourable change to my coming home. In the course of another week my apprehensions were dissipated altogether, and I had almost forgotten the doctor's words and his look.

Two months wore away, hope and fear alternately prevailing; but the cough and the perspiration continued unabated. At the end of this time, she had a very low sickly turn, and for two or three days was almost entirely confined to bed. Hope died away within me. I felt astonished and angry at myself when my mind came to this settled conviction, that my Eliza was indeed dying! It was a period of terrible gloom. I used to expostulate with myself thus: 'How is it that you are so settled in your belief that there is no chance of recovery for Eliza? Do you wish it?' To which I would reply: 'Because I am pained to see her sufferings; and because every one tells me, although not in words, yet by the shake of the head or some other expressive gesture or sentence of commiseration, that they think it inevitable.' Oh, might I hope to see her recover from this low state! Might I hope to see the bloom of health colour her cheek, and the excitement of pleasure and happiness again sparkle in her eye—see her interested and active among her little ones! Would I not rejoice and bless God for it? I would. With heart and soul I would. But the conviction that the angel of death had set his seal on her forehead, sank down upon my mind deep and certain. Often, when at my counter or desk, the workings of my mind threw me into a reverie,

when I quite forgot what I had previously been doing; or else so unmanned me that I had to retire hastily out of sight for some time till I came quite to myself again. A nurse had also been provided expressly to wait upon her, and minister to all her wishes and wants. Hitherto I had made no alteration in my demeanour to her, but encouraged her with the sweet balm of hope, and assurances that I would have her over to Fife, or to Perth, or any place that was suggested to our fancy at the time; and such a change would then infallibly restore her. But after I had become quite convinced that death was in the cup, I no longer could bring myself to continue the same behaviour. I never could dissemble if I tried it. My countenance, which was always an index to my feelings, betrayed me; and Eliza knew well how to read it. She perceived what was passing in my mind, and our intercourse of conversation died away. She did not wish to leave the world yet. Oh, how can it be supposed otherwise? How difficult it is even to conjecture what a mother must endure before she can make up her mind to leave her little ones,—the fond objects of her most anxious care,—rising by a regular gradation of ages and heights, from the little sickly child of six months, to the engaging, modest young lad of eleven. Her husband, too, so linked to her by a thousand associations, and all around her so many signs speaking to the heart! Our eldest, Charles, walked silently about the house, overawed and apparently conscious that there was cause for all the sadness which had fallen upon us. Indeed, he heard the women at their unguarded talk, and he was quick enough to pick it up and understand it. He sought every opportunity of being in mamma's bed-chamber, and it seemed to gratify his most anxious wish if she employed him to read to her. Little Eliza was a gay creature, just opening into beauty; she did not appear to be at all aware of any cause for dejection, and her spirits were as high as ever, unless repressed by authority. James and William were continually together; they were sad because others were so around them. It had been their habit, when all was well, to go every morning to inquire for mamma's health as part of good-breeding, and this practice they still continued. It was a trying moment for Eliza when these two little fellows came into her bedroom to ask for her after she had had a sore night of coughing and perspiration: 'Are you any better this morning, mamma?' This question frequently caused her to seize her under-lip with her teeth, to prevent the bursting out of that emotion which she wanted

to repress, or to cover her face with the bedclothes. How transitory the feeling with these little fellows ! In a minute after, their merry laugh would be heard from the nursery or in the lobby.

But it was Sophia who was the favourite, the delight of every inmate of the house. She was everything a parent could wish ; a perfect model both in person and behaviour. The young, the old, parents, brothers, sisters, or servants, were uniformly delighted to get this fascinating young creature to themselves for half an hour,—so mirthful, so affectionate and modest ! During the previous summer she had been her mamma's best companion and comforter. Sitting on one end of the footstool which was occupied by mamma's feet, she would arrange there her gowans, blue-bells, daisies, and bachelor's buttons for an hour at a time ; and as she succeeded in putting them into some new arrangement, how delightedly did she exhibit and hold them up for notice and approbation ! Or when she accompanied her mother to inhale the sweet fresh air in the garden seat, little Sophia would sport and frolic on the green with such animation and cheerful laughter. How changed now, as her liquid blue eye looked into the pale face of the sufferer ! Our little Mary did not promise long life. The only time of all the day in which she seemed to enjoy her existence, was in the twilight. I used to take her for half an hour about this time ; and she looked more placidly about her, not being, as it were, oppressed with the full glare of daylight.

Mrs Winterman witnessed the decline of Eliza, I believe, with feelings of real sorrow ; yet she had the mortification to find that, much as she wished to be her principal confidant and attendant, Eliza could not be quite easy in her company. When she touched her, there was always the shudder. Mrs Liverpool, and other ladies of her acquaintance, were far more quiet, handy, and soothing.

I several times led her to speak of her mother. And at last she determined to write her a long letter ; but upon second thoughts it was left for me to do. I made it as full and communicative as the paper would permit, and she signed it. An answer was sent us about three weeks afterwards,—a very strange mixture of remorse and love which I cannot describe. In like manner we resumed correspondence with the Meeks and Friendlys ; also the Rev. W. Faithful, which had been for some time interrupted. This intercourse was both pleasant and profitable ; and coming from such worthy people, the letters were seasoned with excellent remarks and reflections. I

could quote these letters with great pleasure. Yet, dear as they were to me and precious to the sufferer, I fear I dare not, for it would be called 'commonplace stuff!' Ay! commonplace indeed while health and strength last; but wait till your turn comes, and your glass is nearly run, and you will look on such memorials as very precious.

Our doctor had long ago given her leave to eat and drink what she pleased; and everything we could think of was procured for her,—fruit, wine, and every delicacy. And she was so thankful and so grateful to us all, it was quite pleasant to do anything for her. On a Sabbath afternoon, the old gardener in whose house we had lodged for two summers, having heard that she was unwell, called up after church on his way home. She was sitting in her easy-chair by the fireside in the parlour. The gardener was a nice old man; and we had allowed him to become very familiar with us—almost one of ourselves. The maid wished him to wait till she should take in his name; but George was not so disposed. 'I ken the road to the parlour mysel', lassie,' said he, and accordingly opened the door and came in. His hale and hearty 'Hoo's a' wi' ye, ma'am?' stuck in his throat, so much was he surprised at Eliza's appearance. 'Dear me,' said he, much distressed, 'they told me you was unwell; but I did not think to find you so changed. Oh, dear me! but I am sorry to see you so far back.' She bit her under-lip to restrain her emotion; and I interfered until the shock of this abrupt salutation had worn off a little, and the old man soon took his leave.

Meanwhile her nights were the great trial. If she did not fall asleep at once on going to bed, she would cough from ten till one A.M., without any interval of ten minutes' duration. Then perhaps she would fall asleep; and in two or three hours afterwards awoken, quite soaked with perspiration, the papers with which she had so neatly curled her hair being all in tatters from the moisture. In some of her very sore nights she had changed bedclothes three times. After such nights, and from five to seven o'clock, a coldness and shivering would come upon her, to remedy which hot tea or negus was got with all despatch.

I cannot forget the sensations of pleasant surprise I experienced on my return from the forenoon church one Sunday. She was dressed in her best manner; had put on a fine cap of the Queen Mary shape, which I used to say became her best of all. The fire in the parlour was good and clear; she was seated by it at her book, so renewed in

appearance, so pleasant in look, complexion, eye, and manner, that at the breadth of the room of distance I could almost with truth have said that she looked as well as ever I had seen her. Flattering disease, which gives lustre to the eye and colour to the cheek, while it is undermining every foundation of health and strength, and subtracting daily and hourly from all the powers of life! Conversation again flowed on freely between us. She told me how many parts of the Scripture had been pleasant to her; and she turned up the 103d Psalm, and desired me to read it again to her. Oh, how delicious was this gleam of hope! But gradually did this bright anticipation fade into obscurity, under the renewed pressure of nights of suffering and days of weakness. Again sadness and reserve resumed the sway. At length one night she said to me, 'Is it not a great pity, James, that we cannot speak of death with freedom, as we do of all other subjects?' This was a vigorous attempt on her part; but, alas, the magnitude of the topic overawed us both into silence! Two or three times my feelings got the better of me in her presence, and this hurt her worst of all, for it showed her that I had no hope. Sickness again laid her on her bed for a week. Nor was this the only thing I had to bear. Little Mary was poorly, and seemed as if she would soon be removed; our darling Sophia also had caught cold, and was dangerously ill. What a house it was then! Two maid-servants, two nurses, three sick persons, the doctor's oft-repeated calls! I was seldom above two hours absent at a time. Then there was always one or more of our female friends present. All these, besides the four children who kept well, stirring continually about; fires in every room of the house;—all was commotion, confusion, expense, and discomfort, trying for the temper and my poorly furnished purse. One way or another, I was about ten shillings out of pocket every day, and I could scarcely tell for what; besides mamma's purse, and the supplies of provisions for such a number. Every maid had her demands, every nurse had hers. The ladies suggested one thing, the doctor ordered another. Provisions were wasted; the children got too much now, and were neglected then; mistimed and indulged by one, crossed and contradicted by another. And at this time they were worse to do with, because it was a positive injunction that they should not be allowed to cry lest mamma should hear them. I take some credit to myself, that by frequent visits, looking into every room now and then, and a few words of

caution, I was able to keep all this household working in some degree of quietness.

From this attack the children recovered, and mamma also got a short respite. She again desired my company and conversation, as she always did when hope predominated; but when desponding, she could not bear me in her sight, so she told me at this time, for, she said, it made her so sorry when she thought of many things,—what had been, and what would be. Still her hopes would rise, and sometimes she said, if the fine weather were come in she would get away to the country; and she was sure that she would gather strength again if she could get into the pure air; it was so close and confined here that she could not draw a breath with freedom. Then she would set herself so earnestly to consult with me where it would be best to go. I could not dissemble so far as to encourage her in this belief, nor could I be so cruel as to crush her only hope. She felt disappointed at my coldness, especially when, with her eyes fixed upon me in eager hope of a favourable answer, she put the question to me directly, ‘Do you not think I am better?’ But I could not in conscience foster a delusion which I lamented; and after a moment’s hesitation, disappointed by the sadness of my countenance and my qualified remarks, she cast down her eyes, and relapsed into silence. When I viewed her wasted hand and her decaying strength, yet saw that she nourished hope, that she still clung to the world, I felt a desire, almost irresistible, to let her know that the opinion of all her friends was, that she should make up her mind for entering on another and a better world, where the weary spirit will find happiness and repose under the sheltering arms of the Saviour. This desire became paramount to all others in my breast. I felt a heavy responsibility upon me, as if I alone was bound as a Christian to undeceive my dear suffering friend. I wished, in short, we could have spoken freely about those things which appertain to salvation and eternal life. Gladly would I have, in view of this, prayed in a suitable manner with her; but I could not find in my heart to put out the glimmering light of hope which still flickered in her breast.

Her books lay always at her hand upon a side-table. She read from time to time, and often seemed wrapt up in meditation and lost in thought; but again and again hope sparkled up into a bright light, owing to some change in the ever-varying symptoms of her distress, every change bringing forward along with it its own peculiar delusion

Under all disadvantages and discouragements, in spite of decaying strength and still greater emaciation of body, still hope lived and glowed in her breast. The doctor, in answer to her repeated entreaties to be permitted to go to the country, told her at last that it would be madness to think of it just now in the dead of the year, when the atmosphere was loaded with damp, when even those who had a country-house of their own in waiting, and a chariot to drive them at command, preferred to remain in town from choice. Seeing her much cast down by this decision, he promised her that, if he found her as well to-morrow, he would allow her an airing in a close coach.

This took place, and I accompanied her. The day was clear and sunny, with light frost. She was well wrapped up, and a hot brick put in the bottom of the carriage. We drove slowly as far as two miles before she desired the coachman to turn. She grew more cheerful as we proceeded; and she did not feel that weakness or fatigue which we had been afraid of. Her spirits got up, and she viewed the passing objects with much interest, as one that was yet to enjoy them many days. She was in a profuse perspiration when we reached home; but, upon the whole, she was considerably elevated by having borne the fatigue so well. She said, with a faint smile, 'The doctor will not believe this!'

At last a happy thought struck me. We had had in our possession, for many years, a book containing devotional exercises, hymns, prayers for many occasions, pious extracts, etc. This book was a great favourite of Eliza's, and was a present from our dear and esteemed friend Mr Meek, the schoolmaster of Artoshlie. It had been lent out to several friends; and the one who had got it last I could not remember, but it had been a few years lost to us. I gave one of my young men the title of the book as correctly as I could from memory, and desired him to call on every bookseller and dealer in books, old or new, till he found it. The first day he was quite unsuccessful; but he had heard of such a book having been sold at sales of books, and he resumed on the second day. Beyond my hopes, he found one of the handsomest copies, containing the twelve beautiful devotional engravings as before, which we so much valued; and so little worn had it been, that it had just acquired the very respectable look which a used book possesses over one quite new. I took it home with me on the Saturday evening, and laid it, wrapped up as it was, among her books after dinner on Sabbath. She noticed everything in a moment, and asked what it was.

'Something you will be very glad to see,' unwrapping it and handing it to her.

She seemed quite happy when she saw it again; but exclaimed, 'This is not our own.'

I said, no; but I had been fortunate enough to find another copy, as I was sure she would like to have it.

By this time she had noticed two of the leaves folded at places where the devotions were particularly suited to a dying person. As she noticed the ticket and the folds, my meaning seemed to flash upon her, for she never once lifted her head; it sank lower and lower, while she held her handkerchief to her eyes. At last, after a long interval of deep silence, she made an effort, wiped her eyes clear, and lifting up her face, fixed a sad steady look.

'Oh, James, why did you not tell me your mind sooner?'

I answered, 'I could not do it before, and it is painful enough for me now.'

No further explanation took place, and she turned again to her book, in which she read steadily all the afternoon. In the evening she told me what chapter, psalm, and hymn to read, also a prayer which she wished me to use, adding, 'On your knees, if you please, and I will try to kneel also, although not very able.' How glad I was that my plan had succeeded so well! A great load was removed from my mind, and I felt happy that my dear suffering wife was now at last fully aware of her situation. In order to follow up the good impressions of the crisis, I asked her, before I went out next morning, if I might wait on our minister and desire him to call. 'Oh, surely, do so; I am strangely forgetful not to have thought of that; but,' with a sigh, 'I have so much to think about!' Accordingly, I called upon him, and narrated all the circumstances of her present state as they had happened, that he might be the better prepared for his duty. He did not delay, nor yet make surface work when he did call.

After this there was a quiet solemnity, a resignation to God's will, and an equal temper pervading all her demeanour. She did not wish to be agitated by the sight of the children or to be troubled with news. She looked into her books from time to time, and relapsed into her quiet thoughtful frame again. I met a reproof from her a day or two afterwards. I was relating a story of Mrs Winterman rather sarcastically; she held up her hand, and said, 'Oh, James, do not speak

about these things in that way, for they disturb my peace of mind.' I was awed into silence.

A week of quiet followed; hope again peeped out, and showed how willingly it was welcomed. One day she said, 'Over-nights I look at the rush-light burning, and then at the vinaigrette you gave me so long ago; and I am not unhappy, James, I assure you.' Lifting up her eyes, with a pleased emotion, she added, 'I told our minister that you had been very kind and attentive to me all along, and had never wearied of me with all my distresses.' This testimony was exceedingly grateful to me. One day, when I paid my twelve o'clock noon visit, I was astonished to find her busy preparing to go out—her cloak, bonnet, and shawl lying on the table in readiness. I expressed my surprise at this sudden determination. She answered, the doctor had been up and had given her leave. Fearing that there was some misunderstanding, I was asking her a question or two. She could not bear this, but cut me short, saying, 'Do not think to stay me; I will go by myself if you will not go with me. I have already sent for the same coach as we had last.' Seeing how much she was agitated, I begged her to be calm, for I would certainly go with her. She descended with much difficulty. She could not enjoy her ride this time at all. Her back, she said, was exceedingly sore; and we had just got half way when she begged we would return home; her head had sunk down quite low under her shawl and cloak, and she lay shrunk up in the corner of the carriage. When we were pulling up at our entry, a funeral came up just as she was stepping out of the carriage. The conductor of the funeral said something hastily about clearing the way. Eliza got excited, and hurried rather quickly, and ascended the stair far quicker than her strength would warrant. Fortunately our nurse had sense enough to hurry out with a chair, into which she sank quite exhausted.

A week after her rash outgoing, when she was lifted at mid-day to sit up, she had to relinquish the attempt; for she felt like to faint when she tried it. In the evening, at supper-time, she was raised and placed in her easy-chair, reclining till her bed was made, I think, for the last time. How slow we are to give up the world! Even yet she kept her keys and her household purse; and the servants were continually troubling her for money, or something else, although I was never two hours absent from home. The last time I put money in her purse, I was leaving the room; she shook it with the mouth under-

most, to show me it was empty; I put nine shillings and ninepence into it then, and told her the amount. She did not get up next day at all. Towards evening her breathing was quick, hard, and rather laborious, with a moan. Having returned home for the night, I was standing by her bedside; she lifted her eyes to me: 'This is the end now' she spoke with such difficulty, each word after a pause) 'of this sore distress. Surely God has seen it right to lay all this suffering upon me; but it will soon have an end now.'

She felt cold; yet she said she was warm, and her cheek and forehead were damp and dewy to my touch. I could make nothing of the pulse. Sometimes I thought I felt a few quick beats; but again it became imperceptible. Some may think I enjoy painting this picture. It is not painful now; but I wish to keep alive, clearly alive, the remembrance of every dear friend gone before, else I were no believer in the immortality of the soul, 'when this mortal shall put on immortality, and death be swallowed up in victory.'

At eleven o'clock she intimated a wish that I would go to my bed, and that probably she would then get a sleep, as my presence kept her awake. I was glad to do so. Half an hour afterwards I slipped into the room, and all was quiet, and I again lay down half dressed. Very soon after, the maid burst open my room door, and desired me to come immediately, in that sharp tone which urgency always imparts. Eliza had called the maid from her sleep to turn her round; and while she was in the act of doing so, she suddenly seized her arm, exclaiming, 'Oh Maggie!' as if something had given way internally; then her hold relaxed, and she sank back upon her pillow. A half-drawn sigh—an interval—the sigh again and again repeated, until at last all was profound silence. All was over at last.

How long I sat holding her inanimate hand I cannot well tell,—my face buried in the bedclothes, and the warm tears welling down my cheeks. Welcome indeed were these! I felt a relief from them, which probably I would not have done had it not been that I was prepared for the blow, besides being under the conviction that death was a relief to her after so long a period of suffering. Strange, too, as it may appear,—and I cannot well account for it,—I enjoyed four hours of the soundest sleep I had had for months past.

Death may well be called the land of forgetfulness! After breakfast I was assailed by a storm of demands on all sides: Intimation cards,—what about them? Mournings for myself, and for the children, and

for the lasses; and the undertaker to be sent for immediately! My friends Mr and Mrs Liverpool came early; and there was friend dropping in after friend, and consultations who would be asked to the funeral, who would be selected for the bearers, and who would be asked to the dinner. But money, money, money was every hour required of me for one thing or another. Solemn as the occasion was, the expense of following the fashion in such an expensive way almost put me out of all patience. If death brings sorrow he also makes a stir.

The day of the burial came at last; and early on that morning I received two letters,—one from Mr Meadows, stating that, not having been very well of late, and the day he wrote being so boisterous, he was afraid to face the weather, with every other kind excuse he could make. That from Mr Bluff was to state that he had been in poor health for six months; that he had lost his colour and his appetite, and had heavy night-sweats; that he had consulted his doctor about coming through, and he said it was as much as his life was worth. So nervous was I that the absence of my two friends looked to me as if they did not care for me or my sorrows, and that all the world was deserting me.

Everything having been gone about in order, the remains were committed to the keeping of parent earth; and quite sufficient precautions taken that no chance should be permitted of the ashes of the dead being disturbed—the fear of which was very great about that period.

Thus occupied by death, let me here mention that little Mary, who always seemed to be too weak to bear the sunlight, died some time after the death of Eliza.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MORE DOMESTIC EVILS.

ON the day after the funeral of my wife a hurry-scurry unexpectedly arose. Mrs Liverpool chanced to ask where Mrs Meetwell's shawl was,—a nice half-worn five guinea shawl. No one could tell. She had had it about her every time she sat up. It was gone—no one

knew where; and as Mrs Liverpool was rather of an acute temper, very soon the parties would answer, 'Why do you say so much to me about the shawl? why should I know anything about it more than you? You had better be cautious what you say. Mind my character is as valuable to me as yours is to you, and more so.' I was alarmed, and feared a general disorganization of our household; therefore begged that not another word might be said on the subject in the meantime; and at a consultation held of these ladies who had so actively assisted us, it was agreed that a correct inventory of every article in the house, — wearing apparel, bedclothes, and down to towels, should be taken; every drawer and every press locked up, and the keys in my own possession. Well, to it we went; it took us a whole day, and the result was most sickening. A part of almost everything was amissing, even blankets and sheets, and the deficiencies in wearing apparel were shameful. I would not allow the chests of the females to be searched; it was evident that a general laxity had for some time prevailed. As human nature figures at present, it could scarce be otherwise, where a mistress had been so long laid prostrate, and obliged to trust her keys and delegate her power to others.

The whole rooms and presses, closets, etc., had undergone a cleaning-out, everything was arranged and put into its proper place. My expenditure was reduced more than one-half of what it had been for some months previous. If during the day the house seemed unusually quiet and deserted in appearance, even when the children were moving about, how much more striking was its effect while sitting by myself, after the whole household besides were gone to rest, or when I awoke during the night! Formerly, either the faint cry of little Mary's wailing reached my ears from the nursery, or the long teasing cough of poor mamma caused a painful feeling; and still the heavy moan uttered during the last few days of her life yet seemed sounding in my ears.

Now all was silent, except the lengthened regular breathing of the boys, all of whom I had taken in beside me; or the doubly deep-drawn breath recurring periodically, indicating profound sleep. For many days after the death of Eliza, I indulged my sorrow as each evening returned and found me in the solitude and loneliness of my chamber, musing over the remembrance of days gone by, and of pleasures now passed away never to be recalled. At such times, while the most profound silence reigned around me, I often wrought my-

self up to a high pitch of imagination by conversing with myself as follows: 'Oh! if it pleased God to vouchsafe that I might once again hear that loved voice, sweetly clear as a small silver bell,—that I might hear it pronounce my name in tones of tenderness, such as I had often experienced delight from in former times!—that I might once, only once, look on the face so dear to me! Then would I indeed be satisfied,—then would the immortality of the soul, and the belief of our meeting again, be no more an ardent hope, an earnest desire, mixed with doubtings and troublings and misgivings of mind, but a glorious certainty which would animate me through life, and cheer me in death.' Then would I pause for a while, listening and looking, half-expecting to see or hear the desired manifestation; and saying mentally to myself, I would not be startled nor afraid—I would hail the glad vision with thankfulness and delight! Still pausing; while the silence of midnight around me was, by the force of my imagination, converted into a tingling noise. Vain was the hope,—no sign reached me; and in the end I begged forgiveness of God for my presumption in supposing He would dispense with His fixed and unalterable laws in favour of any individual.

One of my lady acquaintances had begged that I would allow my little darling Sophia to live with her for a week or two. I requested to have her sent to me to spend the Sabbath-day with us, which was done. After tea I was toying with her as she sat on my knee. Her black dress set off her fair neck and bosom to advantage, and her soft dark brown hair was neatly parted from the middle of her forehead. She had in her animated way been questioning me about something, and was waiting for an answer. My gaze was fastened on her face, as hers was on mine; her red lips parted, and her fine dark eyes full of a sweet confiding expression. Forgetting her question, I kept patting her cheek, and saying, 'Oh that sweet little face which mamma loved so well!' For a moment she gazed upon me, then suddenly tears sprang to her eyes, as remembrance presented her mamma's image to her view; and she then burst into a violent fit of sobbing, and hid her face in my bosom. None of us escaped the contagion. How deeply and dearly does such an expression of tenderheartedness and affection endear our little ones to our hearts! There may be many who would utterly despise such occurrences. They call them trifles,—unmanly and childish exhibitions. I envy them not their feelings, and I am not ashamed of my own; for I have always been and still

am disposed to enjoy the simple natural pleasures which God has placed within my reach, and which arise from the springs and fountains of the heart. Nor do I hesitate to say, that in the enjoyment of such I have found the happiest moments of my life.

My memory here checks me, as if I had been guilty of a most ungrateful omission of the names of my uncle and Helen so long. Deep and lasting was their grief on the occasion of Eliza's death, and they sympathized most sincerely with me in my sorrow; for both of them, especially my uncle, loved her far more than they were aware of, until death had removed her from us. About this time I met with some poetry which expressed the state of my mind and feelings so beautifully, and so much more correctly than any language of my own could do, that I shall merely indicate them by quoting two lines; they will at once tell their author:—

'Oh! that hallowed form is ne'er forgot which *first love* traced;
Still it lingering haunts the greenest spots of memory's waste.'

'Morning's winged dream,
A light that ne'er shall shine again on life's dull stream.'

How many thousands of times these lines have floated through my memory, giving a sweet yet mournful pleasure to me! I felt deep regret when the lapse of time began to dim within me the recollection of the expression of Eliza's countenance; whether it was the sweet animation of her happy moments, or the tender, pensive hour of reflection and thankfulness in which she so often indulged, or the remembrance of her wasted form and flushed cheek in her last days of dark distress.

In order to refresh my memory, I frequently used to lock myself into the bedroom where mamma's dresses and wardrobe stood. I took out all the various articles and gazed upon them one by one; and each had its own story woven of a thousand associations. The well-worn shawl, familiar to my eyes, which I purchased for her in Dumfries two days after our marriage; the remains of the olive-green silk velvet pelisse, which had all along become her so well, and which she wore on her jaunt by Dunkeld to Blair-Athol; or the much-admired dress-cap which she wore two months before her death;—these and a hundred other articles made me feel as if I were in her presence, and were hearing each of these articles speaking to me. This I often repeated, particularly on Sabbath evenings, after spring had made its welcome

appearance and given us hours of evening light. I could dwell on this subject to weakness. I made the mute remembrancers pass in review before me. Drawer after drawer was rummaged; the cornelian necklace and ear-drops, brooches, and finger-rings,—all were made to awaken another and another incident of our bypast life.

These also, all in turn, lost their power to excite emotion or to refresh memory; and I found that I must lay my account, in a great measure, with forgetting all that had been so dear to me; for it is the law that the present and the future shall always, and in a great degree, occupy the mind to the exclusion of the past. Stung by this painful thought, I exclaimed to myself, 'No, never while I have a mind within me will I forget you! I will take my pen and will write down every particular worthy of being recorded. I will amuse my long, dull, vacant evenings by so doing; it will be pleasant employment at the time, and will prove a refreshing remembrance in after life.' To this motive I owe the resolution to write a narrative of my life, which I have thus brought down to the period when I first began to it. Another inducement to write it was this: I thought I might be taken away from my children before I had had time to see them acting on good and established principles in the world, and that by confessing candidly the sins and errors of my bygone life, my children might be benefited by a perusal of it, when I was no more at hand to restrain, by advice or correction, their irregularities or errors.

But the principal and immediately moving cause which set me to work, was the total want of any agreeable employment in which to pass away my evenings after warehouse hours; for I often felt exceedingly lonely when I returned home, and I was afraid it might ultimately become distasteful to me altogether in the evenings. My friends were very kind, and often asked me out to supper; but this took me away from the elder children, the inspection of whose lessons was my first and pleasant duty on coming home. Sometimes I would ask one or two friends to accompany me, to pass away two hours over a crust of bread and cheese and a tumbler of punch. But, besides these givings and takings with my friends, I began to find my way once, twice, or sometimes thrice in one week to a tavern or inn, at one time with a traveller, at another with a customer; and I was not quite so ready to insist on being home at ten o'clock as I always did when my wife was awaiting for me, so that it would be eleven o'clock and sometimes midnight ere I found my way to my home. L

did not go into this lax habit blindly; I saw I was in danger, great danger, of becoming easy and sottish in my widowed state,—thrown loose on society, and my family so young as not to be fit company for me. I remembered the case of my uncle, and how far he went astray when a widower. To be sure I was younger than he was, and I must make a distinction. I could not trust too much to myself, and it behoved me to resolve on vigorous measures permanently to avert from myself the danger of becoming the slave of drinking habits, the prey of flatterers, who are always at hand to soothe us in our sins, especially if they get their quota gratis. So I determined to write a narrative of my life. Trifling and insignificant although it may appear to be, yet it has been of real service to me in compelling me to keep good hours and do my duty to my little ones. The writing of it has been a loadstone to draw me home and keep me at home now for many years. A page now, half a page then of a night, but only when I was at leisure, and had not at hand a fascinating book.

Eliza's grave had been left in a very rough state. I was not pleased at all with it, and told the sexton so. My faithful friends, the Bridgewater, had got word of it; and one morning, about the first of May, one of their carts appeared at our warehouse with a splendid turf of green sward, nine feet long by five feet wide. The man had orders to wait my directions. I got a boy to hold his horse till he got some breakfast, and then I accompanied him to the churchyard. The sexton said it was a beauty; he had never seen a finer. The rough, rank grassy clods were removed, and the new turf laid with the greatest care,—smooth and beautiful. Mrs Bridgewater's man got half-a-crown, and the sexton got the same upon condition that he should water it carefully till a thorough incorporation of the roots of the turf and the soil of the grave had taken place. What a singular feeling I had about me! Even in my own body I felt as it were more comfortable, now that she in her lowly bed had got such an ample and beautiful covering!

Six months had now elapsed; it was summer, and approaching to harvest. My grief was mellowed by time, and I enjoyed the season as well as others. Our summer lodging this year was uncle's cottage at Braehead, and little enough room they had; but Helen made all right wherever she had a hand, and the younger folks were satisfied. Up to this time I had reserved to myself a secret gratification not *hitherto* mentioned, viz., a re-perusal of all the correspondence which

had passed between Eliza and myself from first to last, being in all about seventy letters. Ever since our marriage they had been kept in a little box, the size and shape of a quarto family Bible. It was covered with blue cloth, and, besides having a lock, it opened by peculiar pressure, which relieved a spring-catch,—so precious did we esteem these letters! It was locked into one of my drawers to which Eliza had access by a duplicate key. My reason for delaying so long this highly valued feast was this: When she was the year previous in the country, I had then perused them, consequently they were fresh in my memory; and I delayed now as long as I could that I might partially forget their contents, and that so the treat might be the greater to me when I came to partake of it; and I thought a careful perusal of them might occupy my evenings for a month.

Having come smartly home one evening and got through with Charles's lessons, and despatched my bit supper and sent him to bed, I snibbed the parlour door, opened the box, and proceeded to go over its contents. I felt a curious perplexity, for the box did not look inside what it ought to have been; it was not so full. I found all the letters of my own writing tied up together in one parcel. These I laid aside, for it was not them I wanted so particularly to see; it was Eliza's to me; and with a nervous haste I emptied all the other contents of the box on the table. Her letters to me were nowhere to be seen! For a moment I thought it possible that I might have them somewhere else, or that they might be in some of her own drawers; but when I remembered how often I had been over all these, my hopes died away. If ever disappointment was personified, surely I was the man, and this was the time! Cruelly mortified, my mind became a chaos of contending passions. I felt that the letters were gone from me for ever,—an irreparable loss, annihilation to my fondest hopes; and a feeling as if I had just lost Eliza a second time stole over me. We had had various conversations at former periods concerning these letters, which now came into my mind, and convinced me that I had no chance of ever seeing them again. She had often said to me: 'I wish you would allow me to destroy these letters of mine. I am ashamed when I look at them; it always makes me feel sore when I think I was a burden to you even before we were married; and then they are so full of complainings, and reflect so much upon Mrs Winterman and my mother. I really wish, I say, you would give me them, that I may burn them;' to which I generally replied, 'No, that

I will not consent to. If I am pleased with them, and value them, and wish to preserve them, you must just be content, for those I wrote you are your property, and those you wrote me are mine. If you are very earnest and determined upon this, I see no other way but that the whole, mine as well as yours, be committed to the flames.' Here our conversations generally broke off, with a remark from her, such as, 'Your letters are an honour to you, and were very pleasant to me. I will never burn them.'

When I recalled these conversations, no doubt remained on my mind that she had destroyed her own letters. Aware of the approach of death, her thoughts must have often wandered in the direction of what would I do? how would I manage with the family after she was gone? How careful she was to conceal these thoughts from me! They only once peeped out. It had been mentioned to me how much better she would be if she had an easy-chair. I sent home a nice new one, covered with soft blue cloth, thinking it would be a pleasant surprise to her. It was months after that I heard she remarked, she did not know what I meant by sending in new furniture to the house. How could she relish the thought of one occupying her place? or, how could the family be managed at all otherwise? These thoughts must have cost her much pain, and no doubt remained that, actuated by these feelings, she had deliberately selected and burnt all her own letters. But not entirely did she destroy them; three subsequent to our marriage were left, well written and happily expressed. They were highly prized in this time of disappointment. In the first blush of my mortification, anger held place for a short time; but it soon died away and gave place to other and better feelings, as my mind pictured her preparing for death with the blue box open on the table before her, reading and burning letter after letter. It was a solemn time then with her; and when a little space had elapsed, I concluded that she had done what was quite right in the circumstances. Then to what advantage did her character show on this occasion, as a Christian, a daughter, and a wife! Having forgiven fully and freely the wrongs she had suffered from her mother and Mrs Winterman, she considered it right to destroy all evidence of it; but not forgetful of me, she left me these three well-selected letters as memorials of her affection.

The subject of widowers marrying again had frequently been brought forward for discussion at parties where Eliza and I had been present,

Little anticipating any such state for myself, I generally took the side of the widowers, contending that to marry again, in nine cases out of ten, was the best course they could take ; because, if they happened to be left with a large family, and none of the females grown up to womanhood, little or no alternative was left him. For it was almost impossible to find a woman, who, as a housekeeper, would act a mother's part, especially among young ones ; and although she were willing to do so, yet she could not exert a mother's authority. The young people soon become aware of this, and resist the attempts made by her to keep them in due subordination. Hence intestine discord and altercation,—a school of the most pernicious tendency ; for no one so bred can ever eradicate the propensity to rebellion. It goes with them wherever they go, to the end of life. Besides this, I argued, a man requires society, and it was better to have a companion at home, than to be driven abroad by the want of it. Further, I argued, how many began by taking in a housekeeper, and making her a wife afterwards ; and surely it was more likely to prove a happy alliance when a man made a free choice, rather than when he had been blinded by the arts of an interested woman, who could keep up a semblance for a time, and throw it entirely away afterwards. And I added emphatically, that there was no illustration I could think of which better proved the excellence of the female character amongst us than the fact, that many of them (spite of novel-writers) made admirable step-mothers.

My female opponents in these disputings (married of course) did by no means want a reply, which generally consisted in real or assumed cases where stepmothers were unworthy of that position ; and if one or two such could be named, I was considered as routed. It was not so much that I was quite sure I was right in what I contended for, as that I wished to encourage a lively controversy. It was, however, a throwing away of my popularity among the ladies, who never spoke on the subject coolly. Indeed, the conduct of stepmothers has generally been subjected to severe, I may almost say, in many cases to uncharitable and unmerciful animadversion ; nay, they have been held up *in terrorem* as bugbears or hobgoblins. What more common than for the females in charge to say, " My lad, or my lass, wait till you get a stepmother, and she will make you stand round ? " and thus an instinctive prejudice is implanted,—a feeling of hatred which it may take years of the most kind and judicious treatment to eradicate. For

my own part, I could name a number of instances in which stepmothers have been of inestimable value. However, I now believe that after Eliza found herself getting so poorly, all these arguments of mine had come freshly to her remembrance; and she had construed them (what they really were) as the expression of my deliberate sentiments. It might have been this secret belief,—for we never once spoke on the subject privately,—which made my dear Eliza so close and incommunicative when she felt herself sinking. Who could blame her?

At the Whitsunday term succeeding the period of my becoming a widower, I found it absolutely necessary to have some female of years and experience to superintend more correctly the bodily necessities, the habits, manners, and morals of my children. And, to tell the truth, it was high time that I had one invested with authority; for those who remained in the house had been taking the easiest way for themselves; and too much indulgence having been allowed them, I could not shut my eyes to the unpleasant fact that the children were fast retrograding, and becoming impudent, unruly, and discontented. After my wish to procure a housekeeper was known amongst my friends, I was more annoyed by applications for the situation, backed by the recommendation of one or other of them, than I was assisted or gratified, for each was importunate that the person they recommended should be chosen, although on inquiry I found that one had a notoriously bad temper, another was scarcely honest, a third a lazy actionless creature; another, so far from being capable of teaching or assisting others, had much need to be taught the rudiments herself. I felt quite perplexed, and ran a risk of offending all my lady friends, when an event turned up which relieved me from further trouble.

An elderly and rather genteel person, who had long filled the situation of an upper servant and housekeeper, and who had been intimately acquainted with my wife, and had been much esteemed by her, heard of my want, called on my two principal lady friends, offered herself, and was at once approved and accepted. She could manage and arrange everything in a quiet easy way; and now peace, order, and economy prevailed in the house once more. She did all with the assistance of one under-servant at four pounds per annum, while she was pleased with nine pounds for herself. I was greatly relieved as to money matters, for she was scrupulously honest; and every morning when I rang the bell to take away the breakfast things, she came into the parlour and told me what was wanted for the day, and how she

was off for money. She was under no necessity to take a place like this, having substance of her own; but on trial, had found idleness very irksome to her, after a long and busy life.

The children were now busy at school. Little Sophy was out on loan with a lady at country lodgings. She had pressed me to let her go with her; and on the score that it would improve her health, I had consented. But I went frequently to see her. I could not stay away from her, she was so animated, frolicsome, and cheerful; every now and then delighting you by her unrestrained and hearty laugh; and then again winning your heart by some display of tender feeling, it might be for a poor girl, a pet bird, or any unwell person; and so obedient, gentle, and tractable! No wonder she was such a favourite.

I had now much leisure to think over my state. I had nothing in the world troubling me, only I was *very very* poor. How willingly would I now have sold off two hundred pounds' value of my furniture! I had no use for it. I was made sick by seeing it. Our principal room, in which was furniture that cost me one hundred and ten pounds, was of no use to me. I seldom entered it. It was cleaned out once a week, and was a source of trouble and nothing else. I almost think I could have sold off two hundred pounds' worth of my furniture without any inconvenience; but this would have created a clamour against me, and perhaps have injured my credit, and caused a run upon me, which I was always afraid of. I had thoughts to board and educate all my family out, but I found this would produce no saving. In truth, I wanted nerve to carry out anything like a radical reform of my domestic establishment into effect. Measures of economy and retrenchment are never palatable, and seldom inflicted by a man upon himself: they generally are the result of dire necessity. So here all my resolves and re-resolves ended in being quiet, and letting things alone as they were.

It was still as much as ever the principal employment of my time to arrange my money payments; renew where I could get a renewal; pay a part where I could get it accepted; and give fair words, and, I fear, sometimes make promises when I had little hopes of performing them; while, if sternly threatened, I had recourse to my last and true excuse: 'Well, if you do push me, as you say, it will break my credit, and most likely bring me down.' This was quite possible, nay, more, very probable. Under the influence of all these considerations, I continued as I was, practising as much economy as I found practicable.

consistent with decent appearances. My yearly balance, notwithstanding all the expenses consequent on my domestic troubles, still showed as well as the previous one, so that I was not discouraged.

I found a pleasant excitement in spending about two hours every day overhauling my young folks and their lessons. I remembered how I had once been startled when my uncle asked me for a sight of my slate, and how busy it made me for ten days afterwards; and how, for want of such a stimulus, I relapsed into indifference. My young people at eleven years of age were better scholars than I was at fourteen years, when I was taken away from the school. It is now almost trite to say that it is very wrong to urge the youthful mind to tasks above its strength, or to put it to study subjects beyond its years. Let the boys have plenty of work and plenty of play; and try if possible to make them in love with their learning, by explaining the use and necessity of it. I like a good, honest, plodding dunce even, in preference to your skim-the-surface chaps, who have more capacity for learning quickly, but who are also quick to unlearn and forget. But the dunce has too much labour in laying his foundation ever to forget what cost him so dear.

My March journey in the year succeeding mamma's death was now due, and I was prepared to go, but with some reluctance; for Sophia had rather a bad cold, and my housekeeper wished me to remain at home another week. I consented. The company of this sweet child, I hesitate not to say, was the best solace and sweetest enjoyment I possessed. At this time she was up all day, playing about as usual; she was proud of any attention shown her, and so grateful for any little gift, that it made it quite pleasant for any one to be near her. There was a fund of natural affection in her disposition which showed itself in various ways. After dinner, when looking for my hat to go out again, I could not find it, and said—

‘Sophia, did you see my hat?’

She looked mirthfully at me, and said, ‘I know, but I’ll no tell; you’ll not get it, and you must stay wi’ me a’ day.’

In ordinary she would bound and skip about, quite satisfied with the enjoyment of her own animal spirits; at other times she would come cowering close up to me as if soliciting my notice. She would take one of my hands between her two soft little white ones and press it; then she would lay her cheek upon it, until I took her on my knee and gave her ‘one little kiss.’ If I was pensive, leaning my head on

my hand or on the table, she would come up softly and ask me if I had a sore head; and if I said, Yes, she would be sure to ask about it the next time I came in. Shortly before this, in the cold weather, I took her a few nights to sleep with me, thinking I could keep the clothes better upon her than her little restless bedfellow would allow. She used to awake before me in the morning, and amused herself by touching my nose, or giving my whiskers a very slight twitch; and the abortive half attempts I made (as I felt something) to rouse myself from sleep, excited her risible faculties until they overpowered her, and produced her exhilarating laugh, which awakened me in the most pleasant manner imaginable.

I rather regretted granting my compliance to postpone my journey, for, as usual, I was much in want of cash. Sophia seemed in no danger, and played about as usual; only she was not good at swallowing anything, and when she took a drink hastily she choked as it were, and it came up and ran through her nose. Our doctor having been called in, said she had a little of a sore throat. After this she became a little feverish; there was a visible tendency to croup in her symptoms, and now I became somewhat alarmed. She was now weak, and sleepy from time to time; lay a good deal in bed; and all my anxiety was roused. During one of her dozings in a forenoon, I was beside her listening to her laborious breathing, when she awoke, and seeing who it was, she put up her hand and felt all over my face in her usual affectionate way. She then said to the housekeeper, 'Helen, how have you not given papa his tea?' She was answered that it was only twelve o'clock yet. 'Then give papa a glass of wine.' I told her I had no use for it, as I would soon be home again to dinner. 'Yes, papa, take it, take it,' said she, and turning to her other side fell asleep again.

The symptoms continuing, she was bled with leeches, bathed, got medicine in abundance, but she grew no better. She continued uneasy. Two days after she grew much worse towards evening. I sat up with her, accompanied by two females, one of whom was carrying her about. Suddenly she said she wanted to papa; I took her, and in a little she said, rather impatiently, 'Papa, how do I never get any meat now?' Glad to hear this, a cup of half-warm milk and a little of the soft of a loaf was given her, which, to our delighted surprise, she quickly despatched; and all of us concluded she had got the turn of her illness, under which impression I selected a psalm &c

thanksgiving, which I read, and went to bed full of hope and thankfulness.

She was not so much better next morning as I had expected. She continued uneasy, but I was not discouraged, until our medical man called upon me at the warehouse, and after hearing my exulting account of the incident of the bread and milk, he said—

‘Yes, sir, so far good; but yet she is not better this morning, the croup still affects her considerably. I am afraid of her strength failing her, she has had such a long struggle.’

I understood at once that he meant to say in short that Sophia’s case was hopeless. I did not believe him. I neither could nor would do it. He continued to tell me that he had prepared a very strong and powerful medicine for her—

‘But,’ said he, ‘you must administer it yourself, for I cannot trust it to the women; and if it fail of the desired effect, I do not know what else we can do for her, poor little darling; but I hope it will operate a change.’

We went together. I began to soothe my Sophia as well as I could; but the moment I spoke of more medicine she became quite agitated, for she had previously taken so much with implicit obedience that she was now quite sick of it. Weak as she was, she half raised herself in her bed, and holding up her hand, cried, ‘Oh! no, no, papa, I cannot.’ The tears ran over her cheeks, and the sight was so piteous that I turned to the doctor and said—

‘It’s impossible for me to do it.’

He answered, ‘I see it is; I will not urge you,’ and gently left the room.

Three hours afterwards I was congratulating myself that she was getting more peace to lie still and enjoy her rest. I stepped into the next room and told our friends so. Hearing this, our principal lady friend came with me, and looking on her, she turned her face to the light and said, ‘Poor dear suffering lassie, your pains will soon be at an end now.’ She was just dying! I witnessed her last breath; and then taking a long farewell kiss of her soft warm cheek, I turned away to where I might weep in freedom.

The loss of my Sophia, thus unexpectedly, affected me to an excessive degree. I was unable to keep my shop for a week; in fact, I was quite unmanned, and my grief might have almost been called *imbecility*. She was so exceedingly dear to me, the blow was so un-

looked-for, I had never thought of such being even probable until it happened. I was quite unnerved. In the death of mamma I had months of warning, and death was welcome at last, seeing that all hope of recovery had been so long extinguished. But my fair flower was cut down in an hour as it were; and because she was removed I felt as if I were left alone in the world. I seemed to forget the rest of my children, who grieved sincerely with me, for Sophia was dear to them all. On the day after her death, our principal female acquaintance said the doctors,—for a second had been called,—wished to look at her throat, as the disease was somewhat beyond their comprehension. I said it was very unpleasant for me to think of it. The lady said it was for me to judge, and she would not express a feeling of her own. I never saw her so stiff. I was aware it could not harm the dear creature, who had now left her mortal frame behind, and half thinking I should give them leave, I consented. It was so little they wanted—so short a time would do, and so on. When I came to dinner our lady was dressed to leave. I was surprised, and expressed myself so, that she would not stay dinner. Oh, no; little dinner would serve her that day, she was sure. At last I got it out of her. The doctors,—three of them came,—locked themselves in, and were two hours with the body of dear Sophia; and when they went away, careful as they were, they left evidence enough to sicken any one. I answered not a word, nor lifted up my head; and our lady said, ‘But they had her father’s authority, and I could not stop them. Ah! if she had been mine, I would have made a clean house of them. It was shameful.’ Away she went, and from that day I lost her friendship. I need not say what my own feelings were. I loathed myself when I thought I had abandoned my Sophia to this treatment. Reason is no match for the feelings at such a time as this. Science must be supported and enlightened by facts,—that is true in the abstract. But yet, that I should have abandoned my darling, my beloved child, to be so treated! Oh, how callous, how base I felt it! I hated the sight of the doctor for some time, and he avoided my presence. Days and weeks elapsed; and yet once in the twenty-four hours did I indulge in tears, deploring my loss. Sometimes the impious thought would rise in my mind, Was she created to be torn from us in this way? Her existence has been to no purpose. We had just had a view of her expanding blossoms, rich in beautiful promise: now they are abruptly shrouded from us for ever! Such were the hard thoughts

which passed in review in my mind ; but time and reflection taught me to humble myself under the chastening hand of God,—taught me that while Sophia lived she was a blessing to us all, a treasure lent us. She had been the best of comforts to her mamma when in affliction ; to me she had since been a relief, a resting-place to my soul from troubles and anxieties, and her company a sweet solace to me at all times. Did I mourn for her ? It was unnecessary. She had made a happy exchange ; and now, perhaps, was with her mamma in that world where sorrow and sighing are never known.

When my dear and faithful friend Mr Liverpool called upon me in an easy way ten days after her death, and alluded to her, instantly the choking sensation in my throat prevented me from speaking, and I got out of sight for a minute or two till I was composed, and able to converse with him. Sweet at this time were the chapters which treated of the love of Jesus to children : ‘Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven ;’ ‘And He took them in His arms and blessed them.’

CHAPTER XXVII.

FATES OF CLUB MEN.

AT no time of my life was I more lonely and at leisure than after Sophia's death. I wanted something to occupy me. I pondered over what I had written, and I found that now was the time to take further notice of the individuals who composed the club at Goode's. Almost twenty years had elapsed since I had committed to paper their individual history, but durst not, as I can now, publish it ; for another period of like length having elapsed, I am left the only survivor, except perhaps one. It is so highly illustrative of the result of club life, that I feel I would not be doing my duty to society if I did not give the subject place here.

Despot continued his heartless course. He was, as I have said, never liked,—a selfish, proud, satirical fellow, tolerably attentive to business. He changed from place to place out of my knowledge. I do not know that he ever compounded with his creditors. He married late

in life, but was not happy in his domestic affairs. Long after, I had a very short interview with him; he looked unwell, and, as I thought, unhappy, but carried it over with evasive, brave words and looks. He went to the Continent on pretence of bad health; neither his wife nor any of his family accompanied him, and I had no opportunity of knowing the reason.

Impudence married a very handsome woman, who, although of a sharp temper and bitter tongue, might have been comparatively tamed down and kept within bounds if her mate had been judicious; but as he was quite otherwise, their matrimonial encounters of wit became notorious and amusing. His coarseness was no match for her keenness. It was a standing joke to repeat their squabbles, especially as neither the one nor yet the other had sense or shame enough to refrain before visitors. He, on his part, might have been reclaimed, if she had been kind-hearted and judicious, for he was a good-natured fellow; but meeting taunts and scorn, the tavern became almost his abiding place. It became evident that his wealth could not stand out under such gross carelessness; and being now quite alarmed for approaching poverty, the lady tried, by her presence on the business premises, to arrest the evil. But she had no turn for business; anything but shop-talk; every one shunned her, and preferred the merest boy or girl on the premises to intrust their orders with. She felt it, and retired. He dipped deeper and deeper, the dilated pupils of his eyes telling their tale. He was cut off by inflammation at the age of forty-six; and his widow has known what it is to live on her two pecks ever since.

Wittyman.—Everybody loved him, as I have said. His company was very much courted. Every one of his acquaintances who got into a scrape consulted him, and it was hard if he did not extricate them. He wrought harder for his friends than he did for himself. At one period he possessed considerable power to influence the city election; even held office for some period; and if he could have done all his public work and friendly offices, and attended properly to his business at the same time, he might have gone on through life and kept his station; but his business decayed gradually; and ultimately finding he could not arrest its downward tendency, he sold off, and withdrew with the wreck of his fortune, which consisted of ninety pounds of rents for his former shop and dwelling-house. His political friends got him an appointment worth sixty pounds a year. It was not a

dignified one; but he continued to dress as well and as carefully as ever; and no one of his former acquaintances ever passed Wittyman without a friendly recognition. He would allow you to pay for his glass of brandy, and would say, 'You'll take mine now,' but was not ill to persuade to the contrary. He took a notion of living out a few miles at a railway station, at one of our watering-places; and by a yearly ticket was enabled to do all the duties of his office. He studied how and where to get good bargains of provisions for his large and rather talented family, by whom he was loved and honoured. He was never sottish, and his company continued to be courted to the last, quite as much as was good for him. A widow lady, a neighbour of his, said of him: 'He was a kind creature; he never went to the city but he called in passing, and holding the door in his hand, would say, 'Now, Mrs W., is there anything I can do for you in the city to-day? I have plenty of time. If you want only twopence worth of mustard, just say the word.' Then, when any of us were unwell, he was always sure to give you a call once a day; and he had always something pleasant to say. Oh, but I miss him sadly! In his feelings of honour, sympathy with suffering, and active benevolence, he was only equalled, as far as I knew, by my friend Mr Liverpool. We were always warm friends; and it was with deep sorrow I heard of his death, of influenza, much about seventy years of age. I cannot help saying again, he was delightful company to others; and so much the worse for himself!

Swagger was not long in business for himself. He married almost as soon as he began; and not having any capital of his own, house-furnishing fell heavy on him, very like myself. His wife was a very pretty woman, tall and elegant in person, and the belle of the family. There is no denying that they were a handsome couple, and they had their day. If he expected money with his wife, he was disappointed; and if she thought she got a rich husband, she was equally so. But I rather think it was a marriage of *love*, I do not say of *affection*. He was only two or three years in business when he became insolvent. He was foolish enough to patch up matters by offering a high composition, and thereby got into a mess, for some agreed to take the composition, and some would not; then he did not get security; and after struggling on for another two years, he sank utterly, and was sold up. His wife, who had both a good head and hands, while he was idle, now tried what she could do, and would have done well, but

could not support the family. He met old friends out about while going idle, and they, out of sympathy for the poor fellow, and because they liked the liquor themselves, gave him a skinful, and thought they had done a meritorious action. This happening repeatedly, his wife felt very sore about it, and thought the money spent on drink would have been better spent on his family. In short, bitterness sprang up, recrimination followed, and he struck, or threatened to strike her. On this, she got a stalwart brother of her own to sleep in the house, and to be her bodyguard. Dreading to go home one night that he had again got half fou, bitterness came over him. It was about the longest day. He could not think of going home; he knew what awaited him there. So he sauntered on and on till he felt convinced that he was of no use in the world, that he was a burden upon others, and that he could not regain his position in life. And why should he then live? Why not escape from all this misery and degradation? These, we may suppose, were his thoughts; and none of a better and counteracting nature arose to give him hope in the midst of his despair, or to tell him that even yet mercy and strength might be had from Him who is the hearer of prayer. He reached the spot he had thought on, a quiet place on the side of the Firth. The ten o'clock bells might be heard borne before the south-west wind; not a few were still loitering about; and their attention was arrested by a man taking off his clothes, folding them up deliberately, placing them safe above water-mark. It was ebbing tide, two hours yet from low water. Some called to him; but he said he knew what he was about, and would sleep the better after a dip. So he waded out a long long way before he got to deep water, at the point of the spit. He was no great swimmer, and went with the current; he knew himself that return was impossible, and the spectators soon lost sight of him. •No notice was ever taken of this event in the newspapers of the day. His friends traced him to the water-side, claimed and got his clothes; and although his body was found several weeks after, all was kept quiet, and I never heard of his burial.

Softman.—Principal clerk in a large wholesale house; of the fine ruddy countenance I have described, imperturbable good-nature, and his laugh, as well as his wit, ready on all occasions. He was quite inoffensive; and, I believe, he was strictly honourable. When he was elevated to the situation of chief cashier, the books of his predecessor were four hundred pounds on the wrong side; they were not balanced

when Softman took them over, as he had been acting as cashier for some time before under the superintendence of the head manager, who left him and the books without any balance or clear understanding. But a time came when, under a better manager, the books were balanced, and a demand for the balance was made upon our friend Softman. He tried to explain that the books were no further behind than when he took charge of them.

But then he could not deny that he had been actual cashier some time before he was so in name,—in short, he could not clear himself; while the previous manager would have nothing to do with it, and as more than a year had elapsed, he was not, it was said, legally liable. Poor Softman got no redress; his known habits of tavern-haunting told against him, and he was thrown out on the wide commercial world, which at all points shut its doors against him. Ultimately he had to mount a red coat, went abroad, and I heard no more of him. I see his youngest sister flitting about yet, an old woman now, but I feared to ask her of him, and might have given pain. But poor Softman was on the whole an amiable, innocent, right-minded lad. By innocent I mean, not studiously, or artfully, or proudly wicked like Despot. His moral conduct was negative and yielding, hence often degrading—much the fault of his upbringing, and the lax morality of his companions. I have no doubt he has long since passed from the stage, and has been judged mercifully.

Leelle Dauvit was at the zenith of his popularity and happiness when I knew him, as I have described him in my last reference. The house he was connected with failed, owing him one hundred pounds, arrears of wages. He had hung on with this house two years too long, and from being man had almost become master. How is it possible to get your own money, where you are compelled to exert yourself to pay others? It requires principles well-founded indeed to enable one to practise honour and honesty in such a tempting situation. I do not know if his integrity gave way under this trial; but he continued to live well, and was cheerful without getting up his arrears; and the mystery was, why did he not leave the old breaking-up concern? what tied him to it? Then people would say, and did say, that if it had not somehow answered his purpose, he would not have stayed so long with a man whom he despised for his daily and hourly equivocations and false promises, which he knew it was not in his power to keep. I lost sight of him for a year or two, and quite unexpectedly

met him one day coming out of a place of business in the same line as formerly. He seemed caught when I asked him, 'Are you here now?' pointing to the place he had come out of, which was but a third-rate situation as compared with the one he had formerly held. 'Yes,' said he, 'one must do something for bread; but I hope soon to get a better.' His clothes had a scuffed, faded look, and he was rather snuffy; altogether he had the air of one who had sunk and was sinking in life. He was not the gem, well-set, bright and clean, he used to be. He made no attempt to detain me or ask me to see him or meet him; for he was a sensitive creature, and felt he was going down. What a nice little man he was!—wrote so beautifully; spoke so pleasantly, with such animation and cordiality; knew his business so well! He had only to have kept himself up to make his fortune, as a gentleman ought to have made it. It was the last time I met him. In a few years more I heard that he was clerk to an extensive liquor establishment, and where the customers and connexion were not all of a choice sort; and my informant said he was very snuffy indeed. At a still later period I heard he had undergone amputation of a leg: but no particulars, except that it had been replaced by a wooden one; and here my knowledge of the once sprightly Leetle Dauvit ends.

Duxie.—The master tradesman. Was generally taciturn, except when provoked to sing one of his long songs, and 'An' sae will we yet.' Went away to Germany, and I have never heard of him since. I see his sister at times—a very handsome woman of sixty years,—but do not feel warranted to ask about a man who may have been dead for perhaps twenty.

Simple.—A master tradesman also. A simple wretch, as Despot called him. Disappeared early. I am inclined to think he failed and afterwards died.

Shark.—The lawyer came always late, and stayed till the last. A clever fellow when once roused; but for the first hour he was so busy eating and drinking, he had no time to talk. The Architect and he always sat out the others; both were gourmands. Goode did not like when these two worthies made their appearance about ten o'clock. They provoked each other to eat. He passed out of my notice.

The Architect.—A companion to Shark for late hours. He was, as I have said, a man of great natural talent,—a fine boon-companion, from his honest bursts of broad Scotch humour,—fond to the end of

his shell-fish, periwinkles, lobsters, crabs, oysters—nothing came wrong.

These two were clever men, and it was quite a treat to hear them tilting at each other. Shark would have at him with all his acumen, and think he had got the Architect into a corner, out of which he could not escape, who would reply in a single dry sentence, striking his adversary's well-concealed weak point, and demolishing all his labour. Any night these two chaps buckled to in this way, poor Goode seldom got to bed before the 'wee short hour ayont the twal.' Both these men might have risen to eminence; both were bachelors; but every night was occupied either in the public or private houses in this way. Late hours in the morning were the consequence; and tradesmen who dared to try to pull Architect out of bed before noon were privileged persons indeed if he did not give them a swearing; and the lawyer was little better. Then professional duties ran into heaps of confusion and arrear; people could not forgive them always, and left them for younger and more industrious men. The Architect died, I think, of jaundice; and the lawyer became a victim to asthma. I have heard him speaking in causes. It was such a labour to get him begun; but after he was thoroughly warmed he got on wonderfully. Both of them left their estates in confusion, to be wound up disadvantageously by others after their death; and it took everything to do, for it is almost incredible what a number and amount of debts will accumulate against the estates of careless men.

Sumph, with his one thousand pounds, which he had sunk in shop-keeping, was really good for nothing but ha! ha! ha! and to poke the fire and pull the bell. Might have kept himself ten years on his money in the way he lived, but as a shopkeeper his career was over in half the time. One day a red-coat called in upon me; I observed him smiling and smiling; and who was this but our honest friend Sumph! He made a handsome soldier; he had been a year under drill, and was a fine-looking fellow. I never heard of him afterwards.

Handsome.—The vain showy fellow; quite aware of his good looks; shallow, proud, and irritable, with his dry, bickering, unmeaning laugh, ready for any and every joke; was put by his friends into business in a thriving country town, and he was vain enough to usurp a lead. No dinner-party was complete without Handsome; no ball except he was a director. Well, he got his hands filled. He became noted for intrigue. A very decent thoughtless man and his wife

allowed their daughter to go as only servant to him. The consequences were what might have been expected. But he was caught in his own net at last. Knowing his character, some shameless creatures inveigled him into a trap, and he had to stand by the legal consequences; and this happening a second time, he seemed to have taken a disgust at life,—at any rate he died suddenly, was very quietly buried, and no one knew his complaint.

Swell.—A fashionable shopkeeper; dressed very foppishly; a good-tempered fellow; *driving* a large business at no profit! The pleasant, polite, empty fellow, who never stayed late, and was hardly a member of the club. Would be the greatest man in his line in Edinburgh! He advertised, and drove on; but in the midst of his hard work—and he did work very hard—he was laid hold of by the family malady, and sank under decline at thirty-eight years of age. His estate paid twelve shillings in the pound. I well remember the last time I saw him. I was in a garden, and was talking loud behind a hawthorn fence of about five feet high—‘Mr Meetwell,’ said a voice, and the pale emaciated countenance of Mr Swell was looking over the top of the fence at me. He observed the surprise I felt at his sad appearance, and said, ‘Yes, my dear sir, I am just wearing out my time here amidst sunshine and flowers. I like to see them, although I know I must soon leave them, for they help me to better thoughts;’ and stretching across his wasted hand, he said, ‘Good-bye, Meetwell; may our next meeting be a blessed one! You can do nothing for me. I am quite resigned and happy; thanks be to God for it.’

Martial.—The pompous little man, with pedantic style of conversation, with not one original idea in his head. Aimed at a large wholesale trade, but could not sustain it. He was going down hill now; and for a number of years ere he died, lived on the profits of his backshop. Was a bachelor, and had a devoted sister, who, I fear, was not very well off after his death.

Willie Smith.—The merchant tailor, and singer of ‘Sleeping Maggie,’ I meet sometimes. Now above sixty years of age. Clean and neat, but faded in his looks. We were always on good terms, and I asked him plainly how he made his living now: ‘Well, you see, I found out that no one would think an old tailor could fit them, or keep up with the fashion, so I gave it up; and as I was well liked (with a smirk of approbation on his face), I became a book-agent, and take orders for fancy stationery, which I deliver *personally*; and,’ he added, ‘I make

my pound a week of it, and that keeps my old wife and me; for I will never be burdensome to my children as long as I can help it.' I was delighted to hear this; and do not now know if he is on this stage of time or not.

I have now done with *the club*; and as I always, from the very first, meant it as a lesson, I think it is now not difficult to draw it. Tavern-haunting habits are ruinous. It is almost impossible in after-life to break them off. I have often remarked with indignation that novelists use such phrases as, 'Youth will have its fling!' and 'He is only sowing his wild oats!—all will come right by-and-by'—as if it were a matter of course. How false and delusive these axioms are, I need not now say. Look at the club and their fate! They are no culled sample—all is substantially true. I have not blackened or invented a circumstance, although I have tried to throw those who might endeavour to bring home their identity off the scent a little. My own has been a life-long struggle against a love of liquor; and I cannot be too thankful to God that I have been able hitherto to control it. Tavern-haunting is now somewhat discreditable; and I am glad that amusements and tastes of a far more safe and refined nature have, in a great measure, taken its place.

If this narrative of mine be a little like as if I were writing under the directions of some temperance society, it has assumed this shape by the course of events as exemplified in my own experience; and being truth, I will not try to modify it. Let it go forth, and may it do much good! My old acquaintance, Symmetry of Glasgow, had got so much into the way of puddling amongst tumblers of ale and glasses of brandy and evening toddy, all at the expense of Peter Crafty and Son, and with their connexion and customers, that his formerly athletic, well-knit body became soft and flabby. He caught cold somehow,—for it was easy to disorder him now,—and it formed itself into a rapid decline. He went to the country for seven weeks; but, in place of recovering, he came home hardly able to mount his own stair, and died in a week after, leaving a widow and young family to shift for themselves. He left seven hundred pounds. His widow had the misery to see her eldest son take heartily to the bottle at twenty years of age.

Mr Bluff mourned for Symmetry as for a brother. Each of them had been about the same time in Messrs Crafty's establishment, and had done much to amass the great wealth now possessed by this firm.

And Mr Bluff was alive. I was there on a visit to the event. He was with the same landlady as he had years: and, while I waited his coming in, his landlady, as an old acquaintance, reverted to old stories. When I believed him to be, a good, regular, and peaceful man, I shook her head, and said, 'Ah, sir, Mr Bluff is a very different man what you knew him, when you used to eat fried ham with him. It was seldom he tasted anything of liquor then; he never home before eleven o'clock, and, besides being averse of drink, he has got into an awful way of swearing! He is a changed man, as you will soon see.'

He took his broth and a little fish, saying he detested it, although he had got some for me. He had a swelled time, and was a little lame. I was vexed and astonished at both in his person and manners. He swore coarsely on me, and seemed to think it right; and his discourse consisted of descriptions of drinking-bouts which he had been present at, tricks played off by him or upon him on these occasions, and was forced and sometimes hysterical. I was sorely pained to find my old friend so changed. Two years after this he was dying. I went to see him, and when I arrived he had just dined on stewed apples. Understanding he had not dined, he ordered his landlady to go for a pound of nice, fresh meat for me. He was at this time in more airy lodgings, entirely. While the landlady was receiving his orders as he said rather fiercely to her, 'Don't bring a piece as d—— now, which will neither rug nor rive, as you used on my dinner was on the table, along with the potatoes, I did not see, although there was a large candle burning, he was violently. I asked him what was the matter: 'The old man brought your potatoes! It was too much trouble to her, but she shan't get off that way.' I convinced him he was not so pacified, and contented himself with exclaiming, 'I am now short-sighted now; I will need spectacles soon, I am hysterical laugh. Observing the newspapers lying on the table, I asked him if there was anything new or important. He shook his head, and said he, swearing again, 'for I cannot see to read small print.' His sight was, indeed, greatly impaired, and he wasted, his face thin and yellow; yet he walked well

with me for a mile next day. We went into a tavern, and he had a basin of soup without pepper, for his lungs would not allow of it, and then we had a bottle of fine ale. During the three days I was in Glasgow at this time, it was my intention to have had a conversation with Mr Bluff on the probability of his approaching dissolution, and I meant to have urged him to put both his temporal and spiritual affairs into such order as he might wish when that event really did approach, which, to all but himself, appeared close at hand. This I considered to be my duty, because I was sure there was not one in the world who knew more of his mind than I did. He was always so happy to see me, and declared often that the time I had been with him in Crafty's was the happiest period of his life, for, he said, he had been so well assisted in the business by Symmetry, Walter, and myself, that everything was cheerful and lightsome to him. Alas, poor fellow, his happiness might have been as great yet if he had not fallen into degrading habits! But I must say this much for Symmetry and him, that the situation in which they had been placed had tended much to ruin them, seeing that all their pocket expenses had been allowed, and that it was a favourite plan of old Crafty's to treat all influential underlings with liquor, through the agency of Messrs Bluff and Symmetry. But the disappointments Mr Bluff had met with in wooing gave an impetus to his bad habits, and, as I may say, sent him down hill in double-quick time. He had no mental resources,—no more had Symmetry. When I began to approach the subject of death with him, he most dexterously eluded me by taking speech in hand himself, as if he anticipated what I was about to say, and did not like the subject. He said, 'There are — and —, two intimate acquaintances, they never come to see me and give me any comfort, or try to keep up my spirits as they ought to do, but they are always croaking out some dismal ditty like a preaching. I suppose they think I am dying; but I am much better within these few days, and it's d—d hard of them, when I am happy and comfortable, to come and throw me back again into low spirits. I hate these long-faced gloomy devils! When I want a preaching I can send for my minister.'

I was considerably shocked, and yet contented myself by saying, these two persons he had named were most sincere friends of his, and very conscientious people, who would not wish to hurt his feelings, or do anything to offend him. Little as I said, it lost me his confidence; *he kept a huffy silence*; and I found I was classed by him among

these gloomy devils who plagued him with their long faces and sermons! I did not, therefore, carry out my intention of speaking to him of approaching death, having less courage and conduct for this undertaking now that I was on the spot; and I left Glasgow sooner than I intended, very ill-pleased with myself.

He died two months afterwards, and left two thousand two hundred pounds, which was thought a godsend by his poor relations; but, except in the case of one industrious brother, a small farmer, the other three who shared in the windfall were the worse of it. It took away the necessity for being perseveringly industrious; and when the money was all spent, they were lower down in position than before. In writing of my friend as I have done, many may think I have been actuated by a malignant pleasure—a 'holier than thou' feeling—in magnifying his faults and coarse manners. It is not so. Had I given the picture in its naked verity, it would have offended all delicate minds. I have therefore written as graphically as circumstances would permit.

Walter Vainman made a dash in the world for ten years; but his domestic establishment was ruinously large. He told me at one time, although he had then only four children, that he had to provide dinner for twelve daily, viz., himself and his wife and a sister of hers, a nurse, two maid-servants, and two shopmen; these, with his four children, made a dozen. He told me, further, that he found it would not do; that he had marched off the nurse and the wife's sister, and had taken a smaller house; that he had sold nearly all his fine furniture, which had cost him two hundred and fifty pounds. He got nett ninety-six pounds for it, after deducting all expenses. Still he had plenty of plenishing. His retrenchment came too late, and did not arrest the ebbing tide of his affairs, which by this time were totally undermined. Four years afterwards, he failed for a large sum, and compounded privately for seven and ninepence per pound; though, as it appeared afterwards, his estate was not worth then more than five shillings per pound. No honest honourable-minded man can estimate his own position aright. He feels for his creditors, and deceives himself. I have known this happen so often, that I hold it as an established fact. In Walter's case, the worst consequences followed. His creditors were very angry; and the large sum of borrowed cash which was ranked on his estate, made them suspicious that all was not right, although I believe all was just, for Walter was a most successful borrower—handsome, elegant, and hopeful, he laid out such a fine story, there was no

resisting him. Poor fellow, he proved his poverty by failing again three years afterwards! He had not paid the composition on the debts due to his personal friends; and now no one would help him. He was obliged to give up his shop, and take a smaller one in an obscure place, where he did very little business.

He latterly lost heart; the bloom fled his cheek; and he grew careless of his person. Cross and peevish at home, he pined under the world's frown, and soon after died, I do believe, of a broken heart, for he was a proud fellow. His widow was left with a large family; and his and her own relations are assisting to bring them up. She manages to let two rooms since her children grew up a little. I met a brother of Walter's some years after his death, and was asking with peculiar interest after his widow, hinting that I would call upon her if I thought my visit would not be ill taken, for some people cannot bear to be seen in their reduced circumstances. I hinted I would give her something. He stopped me. 'Don't go near her, she has all she deserves; and if you were to give her a sovereign, she would have a royal time of it!' He shook his head and was off; and here my knowledge of her and family ends.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE GAZETTE.

OWING to various circumstances, in the first edition of 'James Meetwell,' I was not at liberty to unveil the fact that I had been a bankrupt, and gone through the *Gazette*, with its attendant circumstances. The lapse of a few years, and the departure of some friends from the stage of life, have done away with the formerly existing obstacles to a more candid and particular narrative of that important crisis of my life—certainly not the least instructive. I have therefore withdrawn from this, the people's edition, the chapter headed 'A Strange Offer,' which I was compelled to compose to carry on my tale, and to substitute in its place the chapter of 'The Gazette' and 'Restitution,' in which, although there is still a necessary concealment of names and locality, yet, in as far as narrated as happening to myself and in connexion with my affairs, they are all literally true.

JAMES MEETWELL.

A considerable time after Sophia's death I fell into low spirits; a sort of dull despondency pervaded my mind: mamma was gone, and Sophia too; and my utmost efforts were required to make my payments as they fell due. I was tired, very tired, and I so longed for a rest. How can I get it? for I must have it. Yes, how can I get it? for I *must* have it. My connexion with Nobleman had deeply injured my credit and good name. I was making no progress. I was now above forty years of age. I became convinced that unless I could buy my goods on cash terms, I would never overcome my difficulties. I calculated over and over again, and at last I thought I saw clearly that although I should pay five per cent. for borrowed money, I would be able, by paying cash, to save five per cent. more, which, on the amount of my sales now, would leave me five hundred or six hundred pounds of surplus per annum. As I got familiar with these ideas, the ordeal of bankruptcy, through which I must inevitably pass, became familiar to my mind; and so tired was I, that I longed for a rest, almost under its dark shadow. By my everlasting borrowing I had driven away all my friends. I was shunned, and I felt it. When I looked at 'Successful,' who began business in the same line and the same year as myself (we had always been on the best terms)—he had pursued different tactics from me. His shop was small, his stock was small; but he turned it over, as I believed, three times a year, and was able, how, I did not know, to pay cash; at any rate, I never heard of his granting any bills. In fact, he had prospered. It was well known, and the best of our citizens would pull up at his door to have a little chat with him. I saw this, and could not help envying him. All these considerations pressed upon my mind, and I became convinced, ere I was aware of it myself, that there was only one way to clear my feet, and get a fair and a fresh start in life, and that was by going into the *Gazette*. This I now looked upon as a probability; but I held it at arm's length, though for what reason I could not tell. It was decided for me. In one month I made bad debts to the extent of two hundred and ninety pounds. It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back, and these bad debts sank me. The sums were all in bills, which I had discounted, and I was forced, as they fell due, to let them lie over till I should collect my scattered senses; and I kept on paying in any good bill I could get to keep my banker sweet.

I had several cash obligations to private friends, and I had overdrawn some of my best customers, and I wished to let them out a little

ere the crash came. I did not wish that there should be any irritating cases of hardship, but that all my debts should be somewhat in proportion to the magnitude of my former dealings.

So I kept my secret and puddled away. The New-year came in, and I had money to get ; and I got it, you may be sure, for a needy man is irresistible. I went my journeys also, and realized all my debts as far as possible, sending out as few goods as my customers wanted. I was also ordering limited quantities to keep up something like a fair assortment of stock ; but several of these orders were taken to avizandum, and never executed. This did not mortify me so much now. Having arranged all my affairs as well and as equitably as lay in my power, I went through to Glasgow, and had a day or two with Thomas Nobleman, who, although not the great man he used to be, yet retained half-a-dozen of commissions in our line of business.

When I made my appearance at his office, he eyed me with, ' Well James, what's in the wind now ? ' I was a little sick, and also timid, now that the crisis was come ; and by my faint smile, I seemed to give him a key to my secret thoughts, for he came off his desk-stool, took his hat, and saying, ' Follow me,' we went to a noted inn, where he ordered two basins of soup and two glasses of brandy. Then, in his usual very affectionate manner, he said, ' You look timid and also out of spirits, James ; when we have discussed these, you will feel better, and we will have a talk, for I am not busy to-day. I am not the busy man I was in 1824-1825,' shaking his head ; ' I had a dreadful load to bear then. I consumed an awful lot of bill stamps ; very few of them serve me now ; but I have great reason to be thankful that I am making a living for my dear wife and fine family,—in that respect I have much to be thankful for ; no man has more ; and the expense of educating them was all over before the dreadful year of 1826. But now, James, that I see you are refreshed and like another man, what's your errand in Glasgow just now, for I am sure it's not a pleasure jaunt at this time of the year ? ' With some hesitation, I answered, ' My acceptance to your house of Thomas Freeman and Sons for one hundred and fifty-five pounds falls due to-morrow.' Here I paused. ' You don't come to tell me you won't pay it ? '—' It is not in my power to do so.'—' Well, but James, you know I am strictly prohibited from granting renewals.'—' I do not wish a renewal.'—' But if you do not pay your bill, which you know I discounted in the Commercial Bank of your city, the bank will write Freeman for the amount, and they will

be very angry with you and me both.'—After a pause I said, 'I fear I must stop, for I am quite worn out:' and then I told him how shy all my personal friends had become; how frequently my orders were declined, and almost always delayed; the difficulty I had in getting almost any acceptances discounted; that I had to pay them away in lieu of cash; that since the cluster of bad debts in the fall of last year, I had lost all heart and hope. 'I do not wonder much at that, for you have had a terrible long struggle; but why single out Freeman's bill to stop upon? they will be very angry at you and me both, and think we have laid our heads together, and I may lose their commission, which you know is one of the best I have. Could you not pay fifty pounds of it? it would mollify them.' I shook my head in the negative. He went on: 'There is Freeman's and Bridge's and Isaacs',—in fact, all the five houses I hold commissions from are heavy creditors of yours. I do not know how it may affect me.' Seeing him so vexed, I said, 'I am not owing any of them a heavy sum, rather less than the average; and you know I have paid four acceptances to your firms since the New-year.' This soothed him. 'But would you not think of a composition? If you could offer ten or twelve shillings with security, I think all would take it, and the composition bills would be accepted in part payment, and so lighten the loss and the hardship of taking up your acceptances.' My answer was, 'No; I would not try a private composition; I never saw good come out of them, for some would agree and some would not, and it would just be a prolonging of the worry, and I felt so tired, and had such a need of rest. Besides, I would not get security, I was quite sure of that.' Nobleman at last fell into my views, that there was nothing like sequestration to make a clean, well-bottomed job; and he agreed to have me sequestered on Freeman's bill. He said he would not ask me to dine with him that day, till he should break the matter to his wife and family—for we were more like private friends than business connexions—but would hope to see me at their early breakfast-table to-morrow morning; for, with all his faults, he was very industrious, and always at business by nine o'clock. Suffice it to say, we arranged for all events in prospect,—who ought *not* to be my trustee—viz., Mr Robston—and whom we should have to fill that important (to the bankrupt) post, Mr Friendly. The friend whom we had pitched upon agreed frankly to undertake the office. When the *Gazette* appeared, my name was unpleasantly conspicuous, quite alone. Mr Robston now came openly forward as a candidate, but I

had anticipated him by short letters, written with all humility, and, at the same time, candour, stating my reasons for preferring the man of our choice, who was in our trade, but not a direct opponent of mine. To my own surprise and sweet gratification, almost the half of my creditors copied the mandates I had sent, word for word. Nobleman secured another five votes. Some did not rank, some sent no mandates at all, and we were getting along swimmingly. I called on Mr Liverpool, and asked his support for our trustee. I was astonished by his reply and the coldness of his manner. 'No, Mr Meetwell; I should not have been a creditor for twenty-five pounds, lent cash; I have promised to vote for Mr Robston.' I gave him a sorrowful look, and walked quietly away.

Meantime we were busy taking stock, at which my first apprentice, Mr Active, took the lead. He was now the active and influential partner in a large wholesale house. He wrought hard, and wrote the stock-book. I was surprised at the low prices he affixed to the goods, and the large discounts he took off some things; and on my expressing it, he remarked—'Thrive! you had little chance to thrive paying such prices.' It took us eight days' hard work; I did my part. We dined every day (four or five of us), my trustee that was to be included. It was nearly all he did. I was fortunate also in getting a very gentlemanly law-agent appointed. Seeing how things were looking, my expectant trustee waited upon Mr Robston, and asked him now, as he could hardly hope to carry the election, if he would be so kind as to withdraw. His answer was characteristic—'I'll see you — first.' He got the support of my principal creditors, the house of Blank, Blank, and Co., for three hundred and fifty pounds; but the mandate reached him the day *after* the election. Nobleman gave a queer wink with his knowing eye when he heard of this. Mr Robston added to his forcible expletive, that it was a cooked job altogether, in which he was not far wrong. When stock was taken, lists of debts made carefully up, *pro* and *con*, my estate stood thus: Total amount of debts due by me, six thousand one hundred pounds; to meet which, there was stock of goods in hand, book-debts, house and shop furniture, three thousand three hundred pounds—considerably above ten shillings per pound. So much for my blind partiality in always esteeming myself nearly worth twenty shillings a pound. No embarrassed man can fairly estimate his own true position. Nobleman, my trustee, and my first apprentice, Mr Active, who was as anxious to see me rightly settled as

any (his house was a considerable creditor), all joined in recommending me to offer nine shillings in the pound, being as much as the estate would fairly yield after deducting expense of sequestration, trustee's commission, and the two guineas a week of subsistence-money I had been allowed, and also taking into consideration that my household furniture and whole shop-fittings were dead stock, which could not be converted into money; and I would not be so ready to find security if I offered more.

My father-in-law, I had some reason to believe, would not object to be my security. His established character and known means would make all smooth in that respect. He was a considerable creditor; so I wrote him what I had resolved upon and been advised to offer. It was on the third day after, just as we were finishing breakfast, that a smart pull at the door-bell, and immediately after his well-known voice in our lobby, made known who our visitor was, and my heart began a-beating, anticipating something unpleasant, for he was a man noted for decision of character. He had come that morning thirty miles on the top of the stage-coach, and was both cold and hungry. As soon as he had been satisfactorily cared for, and the table cleared, he addressed me at once—'I have just come up upon that business of yours, Mr Meetwell, and I have been speaking to a friend or two about it, who should know very well, and we all think six or seven shillings is what you should offer.' I paused a little to master my vexation, then said—'I could not expect a settlement for such an offer as that; but,' I continued, 'we will go into every particular with you, and I will answer every question you can put.' And, at the end of an hour, he was so well satisfied with my explanations, and the aspect of the whole affair, that he gave his consent that I should offer eight shillings in the pound; and for that offer he and his friend the Bailie would sign my bond of caution, provided I would find back-security to them for half the amount, which I promised to endeavour to do. I wrote Nobleman same day; but such an answer I got from him! He was in a towering passion. Had written all his people that I was to offer nine shillings; that his opinion of me was undergoing a change, as every spark of honour seemed to be oozing out of my composition; and provided I got myself made right I cared for no one else. He could not advise his constituents to accept of my reduced offer, and he closed abruptly. Of course I wrote him, explaining all the circumstances as I have here detailed them, but got no reply for a considerable period. I was

seething with vexation, and almost desponding, when the sun burst through the clouds, and quite enlivened me again.

I was at my desk, in my back shop, when a quick step walked right in, and my dear friend Mr Grandison, his face beaming with its usual animation, made his appearance. He took a stool opposite me, and, taking off his hat at once, in his off-hand brisk way, plunged into his subject. 'I say, Meetwell, I was at Pawky's last night, and over our punch we chanced, for talk, to hit on your present condition. We had a good deal of conversation; we all felt for you, and the long struggle you have had, and hoped you would now see better days; and as you will be needing security for your composition, five of us agreed to stand as back-securities for one hundred pounds each, that is five hundred pounds in all.' And he named them, which I need not do. 'What do you say to that?'—'Say?' I answered; 'I can hardly speak—it was so kind, it takes me by the heart, and I can hardly speak; but I do feel very grateful to you all—your kindness is a perfect cordial to me, and I never needed it more.'

After this everything went on with me like clock-work. I had no trouble in getting fifteen names, for one hundred pounds each, as back-security. Nobleman soon yielded; the excellence of my principal securities bore down all opposition, and my settlement was complete. When I put thirty pounds into my trustee's hand, with thanks for his friendly aid, I think he gave a sniff of disappointment, but he said nothing. I thought it was handsome for all the work he had done—which was very little indeed. When I went to pay my excellent lawyer, I said, 'Now, sir, I am come to pay you your account, and I will be happy to receive as much discount as you can give.' He looked offended, and said he wondered that I could object to so very moderate an account as his was, seeing, also, how much of it was for outlay. I begged his pardon, and told him I did not mean to object to his account in any way, but that, as I was beginning the world afresh, I was determined to lose no opportunity of making or saving money, even if I should be called a scrub for it. He smiled, and took me off about two and a half per cent. The only instance of rude treatment throughout the whole sequestration was as follows:—While I was under examination and oath before our excellent Sheriff, a rude practitioner burst in and accosted me with, 'Mr May of Blank wishes to know what you have made of the large lot of his goods you got in about four months ago, for the lot was larger than usual?' I answered,

‘What remained on hand would appear in the stock-book; what was sold on credit would be seen from the day-book; while those sold for cash could be imperfectly traced in the cash retail-book.’ The Sheriff smiled, and the legal agent withdrew. I could not pardon myself if I omitted to mention Successful’s part in this affair. While I was in tremor for fear of getting an unfriendly trustee, I called upon him; he saw I wanted to speak to him privately, and came outside his little place. I then told him how much I was afraid of Mr Robston getting to be my trustee, ‘and you must be aware he would pick the heart out of my business ere I could get it back again, as we are in direct opposition, town and country.’ Successful said emphatically, ‘Well, Meetwell, you may depend upon me; I will do all you can wish me.’ Here a thought flashed across my mind. ‘Oh, he expects me to ask him to be my trustee.’ For a little I was mute, and then I said, ‘I have asked Mr Friendly to be my trustee, and he has agreed to accept.’ I watched Successful’s face; he could have made money and benefited his own business by getting the trusteeship, but not a feature of his face changed. He said, ‘He will do very well, and I will influence your creditors in his favour as far as I can.’ I have often looked back upon this ordeal, through which I put Successful’s friendship, with admiration. He was, indeed, a true friend, and we were faithful to each other through life—pulling alongside of each other for more than half a century. I had several opportunities of being of considerable service to him afterwards.

The kindness of my five friends did not end in becoming back-security for me. In less than a year afterwards they, in conjunction with other two, gave their names to a bill for eight hundred pounds at twelve months after date, to enable me to buy my goods for cash. My banker discounted it for four per cent. When it became due I paid off two hundred pounds of it, and on it being due the second time, I paid it off wholly. I need give no further evidence of the wonderful change in my circumstances than the mention of this fact. It may seem to some, as if, while doing justice to the generosity of my friends, I am blowing my own horn. In so far this is true, but my chief aim is to show that a good character is of almost inestimable value; for it not only sweetens life, but, as in my own case, it was as good as capital to me. I will conclude this notice of my bankruptcy affairs by an account of a small incident not altogether pleasant to me.

I owed a small sum to a firm who had not sent out a traveller for some time. A young man came round, a stranger to me; he presented the account. I desired him to look in again, which he did. I laid down my division-sheet before him, with the remark, that as his sum was not large, I would pay him all the instalments at once. He, in a high tone, said he had nothing to do with instalments or compositions; he would not accept of one penny less than his account, putting his finger upon it. Any attempt I made to explain, he would not listen to, and he proceeded to abusive language. Suddenly, I said, 'I presume you know Mr Successful?'—'Of course,' was his reply.—'Well, then, he knows all about this; go to him, and I will wait till you come back.' He went, and, returning twenty minutes afterwards, signed my paper, and took his money without saying a word. I believe he had been in total ignorance of my sequestration, and he seemed rather a foppish lad.

It was no small addition to my happiness my connexion with my father-in-law. I had dealt long with him ere this closer connexion was formed; after which, on every business journey, I spent two nights at his house, and enjoyed his society and that of his family. His character and influence did me good in my business connexion, which was considerable in and all round Dunbar. His house was like a home to me, as was Mr Meadows' when on my Fife journey.

After my instalments of composition were all paid, one of my back-securities gave me the hint that the document itself should be destroyed, and he coupled this with a hint that it should not be a dry-mouthed affair. Nobleman was in our city at the time, and when I told him, he exclaimed: 'Leave it all to me, and say this day week in the Star. You make sure of your father-in-law and the Bailie, and the document, and we will have your trustee and law-agent, and your five friends;' and, at my request, Wittyman was added to the number, he was so deeply in earnest in all that concerned me, although he was too poor to assist in money matters. It was a very happy affair, all were so much disposed to be pleased. After dinner, and a few toasts and short speeches, the document was produced, handed round, and then burned. After this Nobleman, with all the sweetness and dignity of a gentleman, which he could so well sustain, rose and claimed a hearing. He had known me now for thirty years, and he gave a brief epitome of our acquaintance and trade transactions, not forgetting our connexion by accommodation-bills. 'I am his senior,' said he, 'by a dozen of years. It was by seeing a nine months' bill of his that I thought

he was very needful, like myself; and then, on inquiry, I found it was so. I dare not now open my mouth in vindication of accommodation-bills, for I have seen and felt both the iniquity and evil of them. I have drunk the bitter cup; it was bitter, but I have drunk it, dregs and all.' Here he paused for a while to conquer his feelings. 'Gentlemen, all the excuse I can make for myself is, that then I thought I was a great man, I thought I was a rich man; and I am sure I was an energetic and influential man. I never dreamt that what has befallen me could by any possibility happen. But, sensitive as I am, you may judge how heavily I have been punished and exhibited as an example to the commercial world; bereft of all wealth, energy, and influence, I could not have outlived the crushing load of misery which fell upon me; and I say it seriously, I do not think I could have outlived it but for the regard I had for my dear wife and family, who never took away their sympathy from me; and I had a few worthy and noble-minded friends, who, when the whole commercial world frowned darkly upon me, stood by me and counselled me to fortitude and patience, and assured me I would see brighter and better days yet; and I have seen them, gentlemen, far beyond my hope. How dear these friends are to me you cannot sufficiently estimate, for my necessity was great. Yes, but for these and the haven of peace I possessed in the bosom of my family, I do believe I should have been the inmate of an asylum.'

I think I see the tall graceful man yet, with his eloquent countenance and suitable action, and hear his rich clear voice, amidst profound silence. 'Enough about myself, gentlemen. This meeting of friends is for a different purpose. I have been the means of bringing it about; for I felt anxious that our friend on your right hand should, in this private way (if his modesty would permit of no other means), know that the long struggle with his misfortunes, by your friendly assistance and his own indefatigable exertions, now so happily terminated, has not been unnoticed. I would now, gentlemen, call your attention to something not quite so obvious, although well known to me. Do you think James could have surmounted all the dangers which so beset him if, like myself, he had not been well supported? No, gentlemen; no man could do so, if not supported by the sympathy of friends—and he was rich in them, as this meeting so well testifies. Both of us have been widowers left with a family; and a father cannot do much in these trying circumstances. It is necessary that he look out for a partner, who may be clothed with the authority of a mother to his

children. I know of no more arduous or honourable station any conscientious lady can fill than this. Every eye is upon her. There is no circumstance I know more honourable to this our country, than that it contains so many excellent step-mothers. It is a trite saying that no man can thrive unless his wife permit him. I glory in the character of the Scottish ladies, and so I may, for I have led to the altar two partners of such worth, every way, that I marvel at my good fortune. I was always in our friend's house every time I was in Edinburgh, and having a sharp eye to discover if all is right in the domestic circle, I soon saw, by the quick glance, the earnest attention, the tidy look of herself, and the happiness and ease of the children, that all was as right with James as it was with myself. Ah, gentlemen, may you never speak from experience, as I now do! But when a poor fellow's back is at the wall, when those eyes are coldly averted that used to be obsequiously civil, and he returns home fagged and worn out—when there he meets no looks but those of sympathy and kindness—his basin is filled with water, towel, and soap, laid by one—his seat placed near the fire by another—and mild talk and soothing words go home to his lacerated heart like balm,—he is softened, he finds he has much to live for yet, and he is braced anew for the conflict.' Here Wittyman gave me a pinch, and while he applied his handkerchief to his eyes, exclaimed, 'Lord, man, isn't that fine!'

Nobleman continued—'Gentlemen, you may feel somewhat anxious to know how between James and myself these bonds of friendship subsisted after I had been the cause, in a great measure, of his commercial embarrassment. I will tell you. I had much to endure after my stoppage, and not the least bitter portion was the letters I got from dear friends, and personal interviews with them, trying to get preferences, failing which, angry and reproachful words often followed, hard to bear indeed. But my dear friend there,' pointing to me, 'never once reproached me. The first time I saw him after the mischief was done, he gave me his hand, with his quiet affectionate smile, as cordially as ever.' Here his voice grew husky, and he sat down, Wittyman taking the lead in an energetic 'Hear, hear,' with general and continued applause.

None who were present will ever forget that dinner, when the manly and handsome and eloquent Tom Nobleman threw his soul into the right scale in favour of honesty, candour, and truth, as all the recompense he could make for the errors of his life. Oh, the value of humility—the humility of a noble mind!

Next morning, just as we were finishing breakfast, my father-in-law exclaimed—' Weel, that was a most capital meeting we had yesterday. I am weel pleased, indeed, that Mr Meetwell's affairs have had such a happy winding-up.' This was very satisfactory to all round the table.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PROGRESS.

AT last I ordered the first five hundred pounds' worth of goods from carefully-scanned lists of prices. All came right, prompt, and satisfactory. A proud man I was that day! I went to my banker's with a notice for nine banker's drafts to pay for these goods. I wrote the letters along with them carefully; they were folded up, stamped with my teetted seal, then pressed, and always put into the post-office by my own hand.

I now went my first journey; the times were favourable; every one was glad to see me, and I got as many orders as I had any wish for. The paramount object with me now was to make sure not to order more goods than I could pay in cash. This I was inflexibly bent upon. It was such a relief to have no dreadful list of bills payable. No fear of my sending any one more goods than he ordered. The good effects of this I felt on my succeeding journey. On my north journey,—always my largest,—the times being good, I actually netted seven-eighths of all my accounts made up to the day I left home, and only two small bills among them.

About this time I became acquainted with the history of Frederick Douglas, the emancipated slave. In reading his narrative, I found he stated that after he had come into the land of freedom, where there were no slaves, he was astonished at the quietness which prevailed. It was like a Sabbath, as if no work was being done; and yet he saw heavy casks hoisted out of ships, rolled ashore, put on trucks, and the horse took them away. But how was it? How could the work be done? No swearing and noise! No stripes and shrieking! The men who hoisted up these heavy casks wrought so easily, looked so happy-like, and even cheerful, as if their work was a pleasure! The very

horse seemed to enjoy it, as he put forth his strength generously, and moved proudly off with his load! I was delighted. The case was quite a parallel to my own. No chasing about from door to door, borrowing money; no dunning letters full of reproaches; no getting out of my shop to avoid any one; no letters of apology needed; no going to the tavern to propitiate any one; no vexatious delay in sending off my orders. It was indeed like a Sabbath to me, and gave me a double enjoyment of my life.

I was not afraid to come home now—never felt nervous at opening any letter. With what elastic cheerfulness did I go my journeys! How beautiful everything appeared! The Eildon Hills never had such a look. North Berwick Law and the Bass were beautiful. I had time to look at them now. Above all, the Fife Lomonds! How I did admire these beautiful hills! My business lay all around them; and I have often thought that a dozen of engravings of these hills from different points as we circled round them, would sell admirably. Where would you get landscapes equal to them? ‘Mine own blue Lomonds!’ David Wilkie said, his eyes filling with water, as he came in sight of them after many years of absence in a foreign land. All the fine summer morning rides, all the beautiful evening drives, came fresh up to my memory, now that my mental horizon was unclouded. At this time I also broke the last link of the chain that remained to connect me with taverns.

My friend Mr Precise, of the public office, had been my acquaintance from the time I entered business; he was often, I may say always, poor, and he had borrowed from me and I from him a thousand times. He was a well-educated man,—a Latin scholar,—and I learnt not a little from him. He had a very loveable woman to wife, and they were very much attached to each other. I was a guest at his house often, and well do I remember the soft affectionate tone in which they addressed each other. Their attachment to me and mine was respectful and affectionate. Our young families were often together. But Mr Precise when he sat down could not get up again; his liquor made him overflow with love and affection to all that was mundane! Is it strange that a man like this could not attend to a retail shop? He had no inclination for it. It was forced work with him. His friends might have seen it, but they would not. I need not say he came down; it was inevitable; and a few years elapsed in which I am persuaded he and his family did sup thin kail. At last he was appointed to the

public office, and never man was more fit for the post he was now placed in. Everybody was pleased; he confined himself to a bottle of ale or a tumbler of punch about eight o'clock in the evening, and a gossip of an hour's duration. He frequently called upon me for that purpose; and we had always much in common to talk about.

After I had got all right for my new start in the world, a great mass of work lay to my own hand. We closed outwardly at eight P.M., but my eldest assistant remained indoors with me till nine o'clock; and this was long enough, from nine to nine, with an interval for dinner. Mr Precise called about his usual hour.

'Are you busy?'

'Yes, tolerably.'

'Are you going to lock up soon?'

'Yes, we close at eight o'clock; but I will have to remain an hour longer for our arrears of writing.'

A second time he was put off with the same reasons. A third time he called, it might have been at intervals of a week, and to cut it short, I said—

'I cannot get out to-night.'

He looked at me indignantly, 'Ou, James, what is the meaning? This is not the way we used to be.'

'Well,' I said, 'ever since my friends gave me such a lift, and set me on my feet, I have made up my mind to be in my shop all my shop hours; and it needs it all, for I have a great deal to do; I mean, so much lies to my own hand.'

'Oh yes, very right, very right,' said he, with a choking-like sound; and he stepped away, and I saw him no more on that errand.

He joined a little club, and with them spent his hour from eight to nine o'clock. If he had been alive, I durst not have written this down. He lived to a good old age, and was highly respected for his honour, integrity, and correct and impartial business habits.

On and on, after my cash-payment system took effect, I wrought with a will, and my excellent constitution was tried to the uttermost. As a proof,—on one of my Fife journeys, I always arranged to be a Sabbath at Ferlieknowes, where I was ever as welcome as a man could be. No one could think how much I felt myself at home there, in that one-storey house, with taller brick chimneys than usual. That large low-roofed room, with its hard dry clay floor, its windows to the east and windows to the north, commanding a view of the steading

and of the roads, how vivid it is to me! As I sank down in the comfortable wooden-bottomed arm-chair opposite to the good man, at the side of a blazing ingle, in that room which Mr Meadows would never alter,—no carpets, no wooden floor, no stuffed chairs for him,—I felt all right. There I have seen such hale hearts, such Sunday dinners, such cheerfulness, such teas,—why, we could eat four meals a day there without trouble! One Sunday it began to rain about eight o'clock, with a strong east wind, which grew stronger, while the rain seemed almost to hit the glass horizontally.

'James,' said the good man, 'there will be no kirking this day neither for you nor me.'

There was a book in the house, *Keith on the Prophecies*, and I was always esteemed a good reader. Well, I read that book through with delighted interest,—of Edom and Moab, and the prophecies applied to their present condition. It was to me at that time fascinating reading, and I hope instructive. The wind in the chimney-tops roared like thunder, the burn came tumbling down; but it was fine and fair when I left next day, all the roads were thoroughly washed; and all the corn being in, we rather enjoyed it, for, as the good man said, 'There would be nae want o' water for the mills noo.'

At another time there was much snow on the ground, and it kept swirling about in thin flakes all Sabbath, but the roads were dry. I had got the poor-folk's bag of copper money, as I used to do twenty-eight years before; and it was hardly a joke to carry twenty shillings' worth of copper money so far! In the evening the wind roared fearfully; and I now and then remarked, 'Hear to that! Isn't that terrible?' 'What, are you growing nervous? Have you forgot the sough of our auld lum-head?' Well, next morning I left as soon as I could see. The little snow that had fallen had choked up the roads again, and filled up all the hollows with loose drift. I was not two miles on my way ere we came to a fantastic wreath, and my horse would not face it. I had to come out and trample a path for about one hundred yards before he would look at it. By the middle of the day the whole country was swimming in snaw-broo. I travelled only about twenty miles that day; but every time I halted—and it was four times that day—it was to wade in half-melted snow; and when I drew off my boots in Leven at nine o'clock, they were wet enough. But such a day's work made not the slightest impression on my constitution. I mention this as an instance of the rare health I enjoyed.

As I still kept my principal books, I used to write at home for two hours before midnight, and get up early, and write three hours more, before the lad came for the key. After one of these nights and mornings, I had to make a detour, and ascend to Queen Street by one of the steep cross streets,—I do not now remember the name of it, I think Duke Street; but when I was passing a confectioner's shop, my steps seemed suddenly arrested; I could not go forward; my foot seemed always to come down in the same spot. I was quite taken aback. I felt it frequently after that; and, on describing it to our physician, he said it was 'paralysis of the diaphragm.' This I understood to be the membrane that covers the upper part of the bowels; and its office is, by its elasticity, to help the lungs to expire the air without an effort of the will. I know it made me creep very cannily while the fit was on me; and it convinced me in good time that I might overtask my strength, and render myself, as we say, an 'object.' So I began to be more the master, and less the menial; and, as I could well afford it now, I gave my assistants gradually increasing salaries.

My monthly cash payments rose gradually from five hundred pounds a month to one thousand pounds. I well knew now what my friend, the rich apothecary, said, 'Ay, Mr Meetwell, ye hae experienced that a' the trouble is just in makin' the first thousand, the rest soon maks itself'; but oh, man, it cost me five years o' hard wark to do that!' I was now quite relieved from the labour of borrowing; and spent no time in the tavern at all, unless it was with a chosen friend, or any esteemed and intelligent person from whom I bought; nor had I any need to hunt about for best terms, for these were always at my command. But I would not buy bargains if the quantity was larger than my usual demands, for I could not be bothered *pushing off* goods. I came to see the great value of having regular customers, who bought all they wanted in my way from me year after year. These 'regulars' are very valuable; they give you no trouble, take up very little of your time, and enable you to calculate and keep a suitable stock, with a certainty that it will go off. But these good people must be carefully and well served. You will never lose them but by your own fault.

Tom Nobleman was still in business. Like a sanguine creature, as he always was, he would pay, as he said, the last penny his estate was worth; and, notwithstanding all his friends could object, he bargained for six shillings and eightpence, instead of five shillings, which his

friends would only sanction. It turned out that the goods chiefly composing Nobleman's estate, fell and fell again in value after he had made his bargain. He soon felt that his friends were right, and he was wrong. The five shillings was paid; the one shilling and eightpence was not; and it amounted to no less a sum than three thousand three hundred and thirty pounds on his immense entanglements. Goods lying consigned abroad; there was no help but sell them unprecedently low, as markets were; and the loss was overwhelming. He got into the *Gazette* again, went through the court forms, and got a discharge for some trifling nominal composition. As soon as he was a free man, he got four excellent commissions; and so popular was he, that he had no trouble to make five hundred pounds a year, and pay all his travelling expenses besides; but he continued to pay fifty pounds here, and one hundred pounds there of his old debts, and thus kept his family in terror, for he would guarantee debts to his constituents even now. So the four houses he did business for made up their minds, and bound him down on his strict word of honour to refrain from these practices utterly. But poor Tom was not made of stern and selfish stuff. He got letters every now and then, which wrung his heart. They were from people who justly or unjustly declared that their connexion with him was the cause of their ruin, although they were ripe for destruction before, as many knew. Sometimes he would rush into my room, and, sending my clerk out, throw down a letter of this sort for me to read.

'What shall I say to that poor fellow?' he would ask me.

'Oh, don't distress yourself about him, he is not quite the thing; and you know that, don't you?'

'Well, yes, I do. But who is quite the thing, James? Tell me that.'

I will now describe the progressive prosperity to which I attained. I was worth as much as enabled me to pay cash for every purchase where any advantage was to be gained. Some of the rich houses belonging to English capitalists would give no more than at the rate of five per cent. per annum. From these I took all the credit I could get. The very small interest then generally allowed on cash deposit accounts made them very easy on us. 'Of what use is the money to us? We don't want it.' No doubt this greatly increased their risk of bad debts, and with some it caused alterations, so that there are very few now who do not ask their money quarterly.

At one time *we* (I was no longer I) had some difficulty in getting apprentices; but that was over. We had now always a few on our list to pick from before we had any vacancies. We were never so well served as by those who learned with ourselves; any others whom we took in from any emergency occurring never suited us in all respects. It was one of our greatest pleasures to have nice, modest, well-educated boys,—to treat them kindly and respectfully, never hurting their feelings by harsh language, or using any offensive epithets. We had a quiet pride in our boys,—clean, civil, and willing to do all in their power for the good of our establishment. They would not hesitate one moment in shouldering a heavy parcel, or running away with a hurley-full of goods, if none of the porters were at hand, and the time was up.

It's a great matter to say, and yields us the greatest pleasure in taking a retrospective view, to think we have never had one dishonest apprentice, nor one who got into habits of drunkenness. With smoking we have had more trouble; but by begging them as a favour never to smoke on any part of our premises, we have kept this nasty, pernicious custom at bay. We always kept them fully employed, and had a list of many odd jobs to be done whenever we could get a spare week for it. It may seem trifling to state, but when I came off a journey and first entered our premises, the kind glances of even the youngest of the boys warmed my heart. Who does not wish to be loved? To show how we kept our power over our apprentices, we must explain. The terms of indenture as to time and board wages are settled by the custom of the trade, and it does not answer to interfere; but periodical gratuities have good effect, with kind words of approbation and times of relaxation now and then, and attention to every symptom, such as—'You have a good face, James, if you would make it a little cleaner; don't lose conceit of yourself, my man;' or, 'I saw you on the street when it was rather late last night, William; take care, it's a dangerous habit;' or, 'I observe you are late generally in the mornings, Thomas; I hope you are not too late of going to bed.' No answer expected. If any one of them was off more than one day, one of us called. I generally went myself, saw how they were lodged, and what was the matter, and sent my own doctor if necessary; and if it was a timid lad from the country, some little thing would be sent from the house to cheer him up. They were always offered a seat in our pew, if they were of our kind; but they

seldom accepted of this, and we did not press it. It is much to say, I never had an impudent answer from one, so far as I can remember. One flippant, showy lad, well-educated, and who had been a member of a debating club, had high notions of apprentice rights. He was exceedingly trifling, and often had two or three of the others about him, while he played the orator. One day I found him at this, and said sharply to him before the others,

‘Patrick, this will not do; see that there be no more of this.’

He pertly said, ‘I do not think you have much ground to complain. Our hours——’

‘Patrick, it is not for you to bandy words with me. It would never do. Mind what I have said.’ When paying him next, I said, ‘Patrick, your time is three-fourths run, and I am sorry to say you are not only trifling your own time away, but your example is doing harm to others. You are almost a man now. Don’t speak, wait till I have done. Take one week from this to think over the matter; and if, at the end of that time, you desire it, I will give you up your indenture, and let you go. Now, don’t speak, wait till the week is out.’ He could not refrain, however, from saying,

‘I’ll take it.’

I pretended not to hear him. When the week was out I asked him if he now wished his indenture. He coloured to the eyes, and answered he would rather make out his time if I pleased, ‘for my father will not let me break my indenture.’ I was immensely relieved by this answer, for I was afraid of some impudence. I addressed him affectionately, and he heard me respectfully to an end. He became a few shades better during the rest of his time, and we were excellent friends after. He turned out a very clever fellow; was useful to us, and we to him, many a time after.

One day that I was making a tour of inspection, attended by our very best man, I came upon a fancy Turkish tobacco-pipe, smelling very fresh of recent use. We had taken in a grown lad on trial, and I felt sure it was his. Taking it up, I said I did not think Tom would have had the assurance to introduce a nasty tobacco-pipe into our premises, and, lifting a window, I threw it from me into a sewer, where it broke in pieces. Little did I think that the owner of the pipe was he at my elbow; and it was fortunate, for I could not have administered such a rebuke. It had the desired effect.

We felt great need of much more room and a far better arrangement

of our stock ; but we could not make it much better, for our premises could not well be altered, and not at all enlarged. At last we saw what would suit us ; and in a period of great commercial dulness we secured it, taking a dozen of years' lease, and if we paid the rent and a fixed portion of the price every year, the premises were ours. We were overjoyed, for I knew we could soon pay it, and we did so easily ere we had been more than three years in it. Being now proprietors, we had had alterations planned and discussed, and most thoroughly digested, and were ready to go on as soon as the price was paid. I look back with great pleasure to the three months of summer weather which our alterations occupied. I was on the spot every morning before the workmen, and the master always met me there to see all set a-going. One Monday morning, when the squad arrived,—seven carpenters and six masons,—they all passed under the master's eye.

'Did you notice that squad?' said the master builder.

'What is it?' said I.

'Oh, if you did not notice, I'll tell you. Before that Forbes Mackenzie Act, each of these fellows would, ere they came to their work on a Monday morning, have had one glass of whisky, some of them two. Well, when I saw them in that state, I thought, if I send you to a job out of my own sight it's little work you will do, but club and jaw and talk the day away. But I must pay them their three shillings and sixpence each, work or no work. But look at these men, they are all as sober as judges : I say Forbes Mackenzie for ever !'

CHAPTER XXX.

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

FOR some time we had been training two of our assistants to short journeys, leaving by the first train and coming home by the last. We now prepared for a more extensive alteration. Favoured by our new and extensive premises, and after mature counsel, we divided our country trade into three districts. All south of the Forth, from Berwick on the east to Linlithgow on the west, and as far south as Dumfries, formed one journey. The whole of Fife, including Dunfermline

and Perth, formed the central journey, which I reserved for myself. The north journey began at Dundee, and went round the whole coast by Aberdeen to Inverness, returning by the inland towns, and finishing at Coupar-Angus. We had space for three desks, each quite apart from the other, and had three sets of books, one for each journey. We now had a serious conversation with our two assistants before sending them out as regular travellers. We first asked them if they had any love to, or felt an inclination for, strong drink; and upon receiving a hearty answer in the negative, we proceeded further to tell them that to be a commercial traveller, living wholly at inns and public-houses for a week or two at a time, was allowed on all hands to be very undermining to good habits. You come in cold from the train, or starving from a cold morning's drive in a gig, or fatigued with seven miles of a walk. It will take almost an hour to get a late breakfast or an early dinner for you. You think you have not time to wait; you would fain clap half a glass of brandy, which has no smell like whisky, into your cheek, and away and call upon your customers at once. Don't do it; no one likes to see you when you are cold and hungry; and no one likes to see you when you are in a hurry to be off again. Sit down and warm yourself, and take your breakfast and make yourself comfortable, and then go quietly and call on your customers. Don't hurry them; you will soon see if they want you away. Have always a little loose current talk about you, the weather, the crops, or politics, the beauty of the country or the town, as may happen; and now, speaking from my own experience, I have invariably found that if I gave the least hint to any respectable man that I was in a hurry, he would pay me at once, but would give me no order. Almost all men like a little soft-sawder when giving an order; for, however weak in point of fact it may be, yet every man in this position thinks he is conferring a favour on you. Let him talk about his own affairs, which he will do readily enough; all that you have to do is to listen in respectful silence. You don't go out as a moral teacher. Every man has his hobby, and will mount it. If you do not concur in all he says, ask a puzzling question in the quietest manner, and your discourse will die away. If any one ask you to breakfast, dine, tea, or sup, go; many men like to encourage young travellers, and, as it were, to patronize them. Never mind, your object is to make yourself agreeable, and to get orders. You are not bound by these kindnesses, only the firm. When you are in a large town, where you have to

go to a hotel or head inn, get up in the morning, do up all your writing, or make a call, if you have any customers who can be called upon before breakfast. Take time to breakfast, and ask for what you would like; you will see what others do. Return to your inn about one or two o'clock, and get a comfortable basin of soup. This will make you independent of dinner, and you can have tea and meat at six, seven, or eight o'clock, as you may like it. I have no objections to your dining, but then you are asked to wine; and if you do not comply, you are sure to make the others sulky and yourself uncomfortable. If you take a full dinner and half a bottle of wine, I would not give much for your work that night. I judge from myself: after a little liquor, the generous sentiments get uppermost, and I would talk of literature, politics, tell anecdotes, and be very friendly; but woe be to the orders, which under these circumstances were a blank, much to my mortification next day. When any one asks you, where are you staying? and when will you be in? answer you are never in, for you go from house to house, and from shop to shop, till it is quite late, and that you prefer to do business with your friends at their own places. And if, after all, any one will follow you into your inn, ask him what he would like, a glass of whisky, hot or cold, or a glass of wine, or a pint of porter; and when he asks you where is your glass, tell him in the pleasantest manner, that there was once one Jonadab the son of Rechab, and that you are one of his descendants. This is the point of your trial. This is the opportunity of doing good afforded you; he will not ask you for a second glass. Be courteous and talkative, and, on reflection, he will think more of you than ever.

It was an invariable custom with me, after one of our travellers returned from a journey, to spend one or it might be two hours going over his book with him, inquiring into all the peculiarities of my old friends.

'Is A. B. still as kind to you as he was at first?'

'Oh yes, sir; he is a real gentleman.'

'Yes, and a good Christian too, that is the root of it. Is C. D. as gloomy as ever?'

'Oh yes; he thinks we are all going wrong.'

'And E. F.; scraping an extra shilling off you on some pretence?'

'Yes, sir; we battled about an hour for an odd half-crown; but I told him if I allowed it I would have to pay it out of my own pocket.'

'And G. H.; did he try to send you away without an order?'

'Yes, sir; he gave me first a good scolding, and then he gave me a good order.'

'And I. J.; is he in better health. Did you give him my compliments?'

'Oh yes, sir; he thinks he is better; but I don't think he can live long, he is so asthmatical. I never saw a man so distressed; and yet he is cheerful! He says you must come and see him.'

'And I need not ask you about K. L.—as correct as can be, paid you to the last penny, and gave you his order all in ten minutes?'

'Well, he did not exceed a quarter of an hour.'

'And how is poor M. N.? Any better off?'

'No, sir; I think the longer the worse. You will see I have had to take his acceptance at four months, and even then he said he must have you to advance the half of it when due. So I promised you would do so; having his bill you have a settlement. We both hesitated, he to give or I to take his order; and it was left to you to send the goods or not.'

'I'll think about it. Had you any trouble with O. P.?'

'I always have; and the longer the worse. He is never prepared; and tumbles out a lot of books and papers to prove an error of two pounds, which he says occurred two years ago. I cannot bear his language very well; and as we are clear of him now, I think we should remain so.'

'He must have said something far wrong when you give that advice.'

'I would rather not repeat it, for he reflected on the house too.'

'Indeed! then I will write him that if he can prove that we have been overpaid two pounds, he shall have it back, and till that is done we had better suspend dealings; so you need not call on him again. How about Q. R.?'

'Poor, but attentive to business. He is well spoken of, and I think improving in his circumstances. He only paid half the sum due; and will not grant a bill, he says, to any one.'

'Well, we must be gentle with him. Did he promise to pay the other half?'

'Yes, at one or two months.'

'Well, write him at the end of the first month; and if it is not paid by the end of two months, tell him we will pass a cheque on him in two days, if he has no objections.'

'I think you have made a very fair journey as times go, and your expenses are under the mark a little, which I like to see also. Do you find any trouble as to liquor?'

'Well, no, sir; when people come from the country to meet me by appointment, I always offer them a pint of Bass ale and a biscuit; and if they say they would prefer a dram, I just order one in. But I have no trouble now, for they know my way, and that I will not drink along with them.'

Such an examination as this is very pleasant to a good traveller, and it shows him he is looked after.

I may here, in my rambling way, offer a few words on the commercial room. To describe it in its palmy days we must go back to the years about 1820, when there were no railways, and all the travelling was done by stage-coach or gig. There were very few equestrians even then, for riding on horseback was too slow and too fatiguing. Lordly fellows were these commercial travellers; riding in their own gigs, driving their fine horse, and some of them carrying a great quantity both in bulk and weight of patterns. And where they travelled by stage-coach they were always sure to get forward with all their luggage, paying only for perhaps one-third of it. The landlords always favoured them, they were so good customers; and all coach-offices were connected with inns one way or another. I think I see these veteran travellers yet, with their seven-caped greatcoats, warm rug blanket for the legs, muffler for the throat, and the hat fastened by a riband. It is not many years yet since the fine card, representing one of these Jehu-like travellers in his lofty pyramid-built gig, and his very long whip, spinning along, was published. These cards were in every traveller's room in the kingdom, as far as my range extended; and I think the landlords paid one guinea for them for the benefit of the decayed travellers' association. He could hardly help himself, for every traveller would ask why he had not the traveller's card in his traveller's room.

These were the lords of the commercial room, which, in all towns of any size, was sacred for the use of commercial men. No one else was allowed to enter it; and there was good reason for this. Every commercial man was known, or made himself known; and as they left their desks and property all about the room, it was necessary that no strangers or miscellaneous company should be admitted. In return for this convenience and security, every traveller in the house was

expected to dine at four o'clock, and pay half-a-crown for a good dinner, and drink half a bottle of wine at five shillings, or even six shillings, per bottle. It did not matter whether you drank it or not, there were always veterans who could do that for you; and if the number of travellers dining were three, five, or seven, there was always an odd half bottle more; and each one's share of the dinner-bill was generally about six and sixpence. The traveller who had been longest in the house took the one end of the table, and the one who came in *last* took the other, under compulsion, however unwilling. He was told that it was time he had learnt, if he had not had previous experience; and if he was bashful and awkward, he sometimes suffered painfully. A friend of mine was in this predicament once. He had asked me to dine with him. He was a timid, raw, ignorant lad; knew about nothing but the manufacture of his own peculiar goods, and was chosen by his employers because he was honest. I observed how awkward my poor friend was at carving, and heard the suppressed titter, with many an appealing look directed to me to join in the expected fun; but no, I looked grim, and said to one next him, 'My friend has not had the experience some of you gentlemen have had; would you be so kind, sir, as take that dish in hand, for I am no adept in the science myself, and moreover, being a guest, am exempted from labour?' This took, and my poor friend was freed from further molestation. Strange enough, in course of time he became one of the boldest for upholding the rules of the room; but he fell a victim to the habits acquired; and, after being traveller for this highly respectable house for a dozen of years, he was quietly withdrawn from the road, after a ruinous craving for liquor had overcome his natural modesty. A habit of drinking was often the ruin of the commercial traveller.

The fascinations of the commercial room were very considerable. There was a great amount of civility and good-breeding generally. Often gentlemen who were principals themselves formed part of the inmates. Gentlemanly deference to each other's opinions was general, especially at the breakfast-table, when politics, stimulated by reading the morning papers, were discussed with rare acuteness and soundness of comment, and, what may not appear so evident, a considerable portion of modesty. Occasionally an empty swell would annoy all round him, and the landlord into the bargain, by finding fault with the dishes; asking why this and why that and the other thing was not on the table, finding fault with the wine, and so on.

If of an evening one of the veterans of the road got the ear of the room, he would tell tale after tale. There at times would be beautiful singers, and those who could accompany them, and they would make a night of it. Nor could they be expected to talk, or to sing, or to sit doing nothing for the good of the house. No, the toddy was such an auxiliary that it could not be dispensed with; and so tumbler after tumbler of warm punch slipt pleasantly away. I must not omit the most lamentable feature of these enjoyments. When a veteran of sixty years old, of port-wine coloured countenance, got the lead, it was painful and disgusting to the sober, gentlemanly observer, who so quietly occupied his corner, to hear him detail the amours and adventures of his youth, careless of inflaming the passions of his juniors. One could only turn away and spit.

In Kirkcaldy, one day as I made my way up-stairs at mine inn, a respected citizen of Edinburgh was coming down with such headlong hurry, that, although I spoke to him, being an acquaintance, he rushed past. He was rather a zealot in religion, or an enthusiast, I may say. When I entered the commercial room it was after dinner. Three gents were at their wine, and indulging in bursts of laughter at the precipitate exit of the gent I had met rushing down the stair. They asked me if I had met him. I told them I had; and that, although I knew him quite well, and spoke to him in passing, he gave me no answer. Again they laughed loudly, and then explained. They had just sat down to dinner, when my acquaintance was ushered in by the landlord as one who wished to join them. By-and-by wine was called: the decanter came to my friend. He passed it by without speaking.

‘Do you not take wine, sir?’

‘Oh no, thank you, I never touch it.’

‘Oh! how is that, sir?’

‘A point of conscience with me; and it saves money, and I am better without it.’

Upon this, they began to quiz him. And the tallest of the three, a healthy, good-looking man, with a fine complexion, wearing a green coat and light vest, and speaking with a strong Aberdeen or northern accent, said, ‘I told story after story to move him; and at last I told him the story of——,’ which he narrated afresh; ‘as also the story of——,’ and he narrated it also; and there was such a mixture of the ludicrous and obscene that I felt myself compelled to laugh along with them. It was the last of these stories which drove my acquaint-

ance with such headlong hurry out of the commercial room. I was not well pleased with myself afterwards ; for, on reflection, I thought if I had asked him, the narrator, if his wife, or son, or daughter had, unknown to him, heard him recite such filthy stuff, what would he have thought of himself then ? But it is of no use to moralize when the majority is excited and against you. They simply laugh you down.

I have known one house have ten or twelve changes of travellers. They kept up the system of toddy treating ; and traveller after traveller fell before it, not averaging more than four years each ; and every now and then the principals had to take a journey themselves. Fifty years ago, a pompous elderly gentleman was forced much against his will to come down into Scotland. His representative had broken down fairly in a principal town in the north, and no one had any power over him. A very nice gentlemanly body he was, too, for many a year, until drink and other degradations got the better of him. His principal was frightened to come into Scotland, it was, in his estimation, such a barbarous place ; but he was delightfully surprised, and could not help expressing it. 'Why,' he said, 'you live better than we do ; and such nice beds too ! I was most afraid of that. I do not regret my visit to Scotland, except on poor Edward's account. But I'll get him home again ; and I hope, by taking a journey or two myself, we will make a sound man of him yet.'

The Sunday in the commercial room was passed in this way : Two or three would breakfast at nine, a few more at ten, the last squad at eleven o'clock, as the church bells were ringing ; and a few would keep their bedrooms till far on in the day, having chosen the Sunday to put their bodily corporations to rights, as they could not spare any other day. From eleven to two or three, half-a-dozen would be found writing up their books, copying orders, and balancing their cash. Then came the walk from three to four, to whet the appetite for their Sunday's dinner. This dinner in the commercial room behaved to be always a good one on Sunday ; it was expected. And if very good, then an extra bottle of wine would be discussed, so that the liberal landlord might not lose by it. Christmas-day was kept in great style by Englishmen in inns. The landlord must do his very best that day ; and the chance was, that there would be a bottle per man. Well did all these travellers know the season for its appropriate delicacies—for veal, for lamb, for ducks and green peas, for strawberries and cream,

and grapes; while they would ask for raisins, almonds, and sometimes olives, to give a zest to their wine. Cards were not often seen in a commercial room. Tea-drinking was scarcely tolerated; and I remember how unpleasant it was when any one asked for a cup. The waiters paid little attention; and you had to ask for it again and again; and sooner than six o'clock you had no chance of it.

But, with all its faults, the commercial room is an excellent epitome of the world; and I know of no place where an intelligent person may so soon have his wits sharpened, his mind informed, his manners corrected, and his stock of useful knowledge increased. I know of no place where politics are discussed with more freedom; and he who introduces religion, may expect to hear some outspoken truth, digest it as he may. If I were a foreigner, travelling through Great Britain on purpose to obtain a correct idea of its social usages and public opinions; if I wished information as to the British army or navy, or the spirit of the country as regarded riflemen volunteers, or the naval reserve, and other interesting and general topics, I would personate the commercial traveller, and spend six months in residing in hotels, living in travellers' rooms as a commercial man. Nowhere does there exist more perfect liberty. You may be a Jew, a Turk, an infidel, a Romanist, a Unitarian, a High Churchman, or a Voluntary; all that is required is that you must behave as a gentleman; and in that case you can have word about with any one in the room, and any one in the room can have word about with you. I think the provincial commercial rooms have the most miscellaneous assemblages,—such towns as Dumfries, Berwick-on-Tweed, Kirkcaldy, Perth, Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose, Aberdeen, and Inverness,—because there, all sorts must congregate in one place from necessity. These towns are large enough to attract all sorts of travellers, and yet so small as to compel all to live in one place. You may inhale the agricultural atmosphere of inland towns, the odours and opinions of manufacturing districts, or you may smell the pitch and tar of our seaports every evening. A single question from any gentleman of modest manners will elicit a controversy on the desired topic, and give the foreigner all he wants—opinions for comparison, which he must compare, elaborate, and digest at his leisure. No doubt he will occasionally be annoyed by some noisy fop, or offended at the knock-me-down despotism of some old commercial bashaw: but along with these you will generally find intelligent, gentlemanly men, open to the approaches of all well-bred

persons to converse with,—principals in large houses, foreign merchants, or their representatives,—guests to dine with the travellers, from whom much local information may be got,—in short, all that is good, honourable, and high-minded, as well as a sprinkling of what is silly, shallow, affected, and rude. Why do I exclude the great metropolitan cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow? Chiefly because certain sets frequent certain houses, many live in lodgings, and, in fact, there is no such free atmosphere about them as in good large provincial towns.

We have begun to fear, however, that we have been describing the commercial room more as it was forty years ago than as it is now, for railways have revolutionized the world, and knocked many of the usages of society to pieces. Stage-coaches are now unknown; and the magnificent, independent commercial who drove his own pyramid-like conveyance is annihilated; the plates of him and his fine horse proudly bowling along the turnpike roads, are removed from every inn wall, as if no more worthy of a place. The railway time-table is in every hand, on every commercial room table. 'My train goes at three P.M. I must therefore dine at two.' The landlord has no help. There are now dinners all the way from one to six P.M., to suit railway trains; and by seven o'clock the hotel is a desert, hardly a creature left, till the late trains bring up a fresh supply of visitants to keep up the turmoil; and a knocking at doors before six o'clock next morning keeps up the almost perpetual motion. Those are well off who can sleep despite of all these petty annoyances. But the four o'clock state commercial dinner is still kept up, there are so many who are wedded to it, it has become a part of their nature. There are, however, so many really good temperance hotels, that young men are under no necessity now to drink wine, and pay for it whether they like it or not, to please the veterans of the road; to rob their youthful features prematurely of their bloom; to bring on habits and love of strong drink, which in so many, so very many instances, have led on progressively to entire ruin of health and prospects of life.

CHAPTER XXXI.

STRAY THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS.

GAME—THE BATTUE.

ON a fine morning about the end of August, I drove into the small old town of ———, one of a class of towns occasionally to be found on an entailed game-preserving estate. The place was deserted. My merchant, and every male from the lad of fourteen upwards, were hired at half-a-crown apiece, to be off at six o'clock that morning to places ten miles off; where being placed in a circle, and within hearing of each other, they were to begin to shout and beat every bush, all converging towards a point where the noble marquis and all his visitors were placed to enjoy the pleasure of shooting down the poor birds, hares, etc., as they fled affrighted on every side to that one quiet, safe spot, as they thought, for safety. The population would not have turned out for the sake of the half-crown so readily; but if you had not, you need not expect to look up in the place again. Was John Smith absent? Was he, indeed? Was he well? John might look out for the loss of the marquis's custom, or remove at the first term, for the factor would frown upon him, and the factor's factor would seriously tell him his lordship was displeased. I was at breakfast when the battue began. Bang, bang, count twenty; bang, bang, bang, and so on from nine to twelve o'clock noon;—the marquis and his noble visitors, stationary at various points, shooting the poor things down as they were driven frightened through the opening between the woods. Is this sport fit for a British nobleman? Surely no. He stands at his point. He does not even load his gun; one after another is handed to him; and he has the pleasure of killing, depriving of life, butchering in quantity, the beautiful animals of God's creation, helplessly driven past him. How bloody, mean, and degrading! There is no exercise here, no walking to promote health and appetite; no noticing the quick instinct of the dogs; no surprise by the covey starting up; no gratulation at the long, successful shot; in fact, it answers no purpose of sport at all. It does not even improve the quality of the marksman; for the game is so near, he shoots carelessly, and can hardly miss.

JOSEPH HUME—SUNDAY—WHISKY.

About the time that the free trade measure was being carried into law, I happened to be in Montrose. Joseph Hume—a name how dear to every Scottish heart!—was the sitting member; and all who knew him, thought he would walk the course, and get no trouble on the occasion of this election. It was otherwise, however; for nearly at the eleventh hour out came a country gentleman of a fair character, but a man of no mark, backed by Free Churchmen and Free Church ministers, who cried, ‘Down with Hume! he would open the British Museum on Sabbath;’ and the shipowners, who cried, ‘Down with Hume!—out with him!—he would ruin the shipping of Britain, and with it down would fall our naval supremacy.’ They were a formidable phalanx, and lawyers were fed to canvass in all places. I was annoyed. I saw it was a lost day for business; so I made up my mind to submit to my fate cheerfully. Great was the excitement! The commercial room was full of lawyers and strangers; for at an election all forms are broken down. Every one was breakfasting at the hour which suited him, and the merits of the candidates were freely canvassed. One dapper little fellow was very eloquent in pulling to pieces the character of Mr Hume,—evidently a paid agent, by the loquacity and bitterness of his speech. Mr Hume was not a religious man; for did he not wish to open the British Museum to the public on Sunday? I could hardly believe my ears. Was this the burgh of Montrose? and could they have Joseph Hume aspersed in this way? I did not know what to think. Not being aware that this room was packed on purpose this morning with the adherents of the other candidate, I was quite confounded and dismayed, but was relieved in a joyful manner. One of the commercial gentlemen, addressing the lawyer, said—

‘I’ll tell you what, sir. Should you succeed in throwing out Joseph Hume, your burgh will cover itself with infamy; and we will have a great monster meeting in London, and vote you and your burgh a nuisance, and traitors to liberty; and we will elect him to a far more honourable seat than you can give him.’

The second Englishman followed up with much asperity in a pointed speech:—

‘Sir, I have listened with astonishment to all you have said against

Mr Hume, and I must confess my surprise at what appears to me your ignorance or your unfairness in canvassing the measures of your representative. Surely you know, or you ought to know, that when Mr Hume proposed to open the British Museum on Sunday, it was to be done, not during church service hours, but at the same time the gin palaces were opened, and to counteract them as far as possible. It was a statesman-like measure, and I honour him for it. You, sir, have in Scotland a gloomy observance of Sunday; we in England have a more cheerful observance of it; but, mark me, sir, not less with the approbation of our consciences. Now, it must be admitted that the proof of all religion is morality. Do you claim for Scotland a superiority in this respect?'

No answer.

'Because, if you do, I submit this fact for your consideration: that it is proved by returns made to Government that the quantity of ardent spirits consumed in Scotland, in proportion to the population, is much larger than is either consumed in England or Ireland; consequently Scotland is the drunkenest portion of the British empire.'

I was extremely delighted with the Englishmen, although the rebuff the Montrose lawyer got was somewhat at the expense of Scotland; yet, if the Englishmen's beer was valued as strong drink, perhaps the two are much about equal.

I still felt very uneasy as to the result of the election, and expressing myself somewhat unguardedly to one of my customers, who I did not know was of the opposite party, he was at me, and gave me such a teething as silenced me. I thought, This is no affair of mine.

What hurrahing is that? A horse covered with foam, mounted by a lad dressed in laurel. 'Forfar, nine o'clock—Majority for Hume, 100!' I joined most heartily in the cheer; the day was won.

I have ever thought Scotland has not done justice to her Hume. When he resolved to devote himself to the service of his country, he was no orator, he had no commanding or fascinating personal accomplishments. He was a plain man; he did not flatter men in power, nor yet the mob. I am sorry to make such a comparison, but he was a bulldog, who stuck to his work, and he shaped it out for himself. He was an economist, a hater of hole-and-corner work; ferreted out and exposed jobs, whether in church or state, in the army or the navy; he fixed upon the rotten places of the British Constitution. It was very unpleasant for him to speak of such things, but he did it.

He was no 'Rule Britannia' man; had no 'Hearts of Oak' or 'British Grenadiers' flattery. No man ever undertook a more ungracious task, and he brought a hornet's nest about his ears at once. Who is he that takes such liberty? The member for Montrose! Oh, really it is too bad; I say we must put him down, this will never do. They tried it. Hume is on his legs. There go all manner of noises, cat-calls, cock-crowing, etc. Witty members made sport of him; men in authority threw every obstacle in his way. No newspaper would report his speeches. He will soon get sick of this. Did he? No doubt he did; he could not have been man if he had not. But often and often has my mind accompanied him on his lonely way home from 'The House' at a late hour, after he had spoken against noise and insult, not a word of which was properly heard. I have fancied his equal deliberate step, his mouth firmly closed, and like a straight line. I have fancied I heard him say, 'They think to put me down; they do not know their man.' And now we see him setting still more earnestly to work, and dipping his hand in his private purse, with an office and an array of clerks like a merchant's counting-room. What are they doing? Collecting correct statistical information; corresponding with every one who would correspond with him, and making notes for him for his next speech. And now that sensible men and impartial editors began to see his marvellous industry and the surprising circumstances he brought into clear and undeniable light, his speeches, not yet listened to in the House, were carefully reported, and read with deep interest. Now he was making way into public respect; for his facts were so useful, they were again and again alluded to, and became text-books for every reformer. Still opposed,—carrying none of his measures except with great difficulty,—he now was listened to, and frequently backed by respectable ministers. In every reforming measure he made one. At all times willing to lead the forlorn hope, a most useful and unflinching ally, all his adversaries learnt to dread the light he could, from his lantern, flash upon their covert designs, laying them bare to the world.

He was now a power, and his opposition was dreaded; and often measures were framed to meet his approbation because they dreaded his lash. Young reforming members ranged themselves under his banner, sure of sound practical advice. An impracticable member was Joseph Hume. No minister could induce him to take a sop; he was plain Joseph Hume to the last. How gratifying was it to him

in the last years of his long parliamentary career,—above forty years I am sure,—to find that when he rose to his legs all was hushed attention !

The venerable ‘Father of the British House of Commons.’ He could say, nearly all the measures which he had advocated in his youth he had had the pleasure of seeing carried in his more advanced years. His name may be forgotten sooner than others more sparkling and showy, more flattering to our greatness ; but I feel myself free to say, Scotland never sent a member to Parliament who did more for the good of Great Britain than Joseph Hume.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RESTITUTION.

WHEN we first took stock, two years after my settlement, I was very much gratified to find myself in such comfortable circumstances ; but I attributed it chiefly to my favourable settlement. But when at the end of a like period I found my surplus funds doubled, I could no longer doubt the fact that I was making money. I had no borrowed money now, and yet I was able to buy all my goods for cash, where it was advantageous to do so. In musing on this pleasant change of affairs, a happy thought flashed across my mind : ‘In seven years more I could pay up all my creditors and not hurt myself ;’ three thousand six hundred pounds would do it. The longer I thought of it the warmer my desire grew to accomplish it ; for if ever a man owed a debt of gratitude to his creditors for kind treatment, it was I. My father-in-law was now in poor health, and we feared he would not get better. At an interview I had with him, I could not refrain from telling him my hopes and intentions. Distressed as he was, he gave me a bright look : ‘Ay, ay ! very right, but be sure you are able first. Oh take care and not cheat yourself ;’ and I promised I would. As the time went on my design became visibly to myself more and more easy of accomplishment ; but to avoid ostentation, and keep my affairs very easy, I resolved I would take three years to it ; so I got a book printed and bound, into which I entered the state of accounts of every

one of my creditors, the sum ranked, deducting the composition paid, and showing the twelve shillings per pound still due. I was puzzled about the interest; I thought some might ask for it; and, indeed, my restitution would not be complete without it; my answer was to be, 'To have paid the interest also would have caused a postponement of three years more, and I might not live so long.' The first year I paid off all who needed it most, including also Mr Active's house, and Thomas Nobleman's private debt. When I handed over my printed book to Mr A. with a cheque (he had some notion previously of my intention), he looked very much pleased, and gave my book a slap with his hand, with 'I am so glad you have put it in this shape, it lets everybody see everything. It was a good idea.' I got Nobleman at home. I wished to be private with him. When I handed him the book and a cheque, he gave me a strange, troubled look. He then turned over my book page by page, sometimes making a remark. At last he took up a pen, and wrote, 'Received payment, with feelings I cannot express, Tho. Nobleman.' The money was very acceptable, for this was long after his second failure, and he was pinched enough. The second year I paid off all my English connexions. It was a pleasure-jant throughout. Where I owed them money for newly-got goods, and the sum considerable, I granted my acceptance payable in London, while I paid the old balance in cash. In one case a despot old gentleman, to whom I owed a sum equal to my old balance, was very dictatorial. I had to tell him if it was to be done at all it must be in my own way. A managing partner had died a month before. He had overdrawn his account very much, and his partners, irritated at losing so much money, were just about to sell his household furniture. The widow was in great distress; she had been accustomed to fulness, and never dreamt or dreaded such a reverse. I went to the widow's brother-in-law, and told him I would give the seventy pounds to the widow, as I was at perfect liberty to give it to whom I pleased. He immediately called a coach, and we went. I knew her husband, and expressed my sympathy; her tears were flowing. Her friend rose and said, 'You were in great distress of mind yesterday about the education of your family, but heaven has sent you relief.' I laid down the money, and she was so moved, she could hardly write her name. It was affecting. From time to time Mr Active and others requested me to tell them when I had paid up all, and I did so. He asked a sight of my book, and took a list of the

names and sums paid. He would not tell me what he meant, but said I must leave it to him. About ten months afterwards he told me he had got one hundred pounds, mostly in five-pound notes, from my old creditors, to purchase a tea and coffee service of plate, with salvers, on the largest of which he had caused a suitable inscription to be engraven, stating the reason of the presentation, and he asked me when I would receive it; also to give him a list of any friends of mine he might ask to be present. I gave him the names of a dozen of them. I must shun giving the particulars of this affair, as so many are still alive who were present, and I wish, if practicable, to remain *incog*. Mr Active said he wished to be chairman, as none knew so well all the particulars which it might be necessary to allude to as himself; and that I should ask Mr Successful to be vice; it would look so well. All he suggested was carried into effect. I was really surprised and gratified to see such a company as was gathered together on the occasion. We had both M.P.'s and J.P.'s, and the whole forty-four assembled were citizens of the highest respectability. Both my chairman and vice were Justices of the Peace.

In the chair Mr Active was quite at home. He was a fluent and easy speaker. After the presentation was over, I was expected to answer. It was quite out of my way, and it was with great trepidation that I managed to return thanks for the costly testimonial which had been presented to me, etc. I then paused a little, and added, 'But, gentlemen, there is something else which I value even more; when I look round this table, and see such an assemblage of respectable citizens, met to do me honour, my feelings are such as I cannot describe. I did not expect it. I have not deserved it. It goes to my heart. I cannot thank you as I would wish; but I will never forget it.'

I concluded abruptly, and sat down. A friend near me said, 'You have hit it exactly; you could not have done better had you studied it for seven years.' The beautiful oak-case was sent to my house at nine o'clock; at 10.30 I left. Two gentlemen who lived near by detached themselves from the company, and saw me home.

I now got a peep behind the curtain. Mr Active and some others who felt with him, on purpose to shame others who had been bankrupt and afterwards got rich, but never thought of their old debts, caused my affair to be inserted first in one newspaper and then in another, for nearly two months. I was almost ashamed of it, as paper

after paper reached me from the various towns. I met one of the class it was meant to vex. He was evidently much annoyed. He accosted me with asperity. 'So you are keeping that "Commercial Integrity" of yours dancing about yet. When are you to have done? You are as bad as Dr Solomon's Balm of Gilead, Gilead House, by Liverpool.' I answered, 'It's none of my doings; I have not ordered nor paid one penny for advertising. Those who are doing it no doubt have their own reasons for it; and as it does me no harm, I shall allow them to please themselves.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHANGES.

IN reading the morning newspaper about the year 1848, I actually shouted, 'Oh! here's our solicitor has advertised his house for sale. So much for falling heir to a Highland lairdship. But of all the houses in or around our city, this is the one for me. I saw it when building; and I have been in it since. I dined there when Brightman was his guest. I'm sure I'll buy it, if I can get it at all on reasonable terms.'

'Are you mad, papa, that you are going on in that way?'

'Not I. It is just the distance I wish to be—half a mile beyond the omnibus; and it has such a fine uninterrupted view, and never can be built up on the west side. Such a substantial house, such a large garden, too; and it is only about a dozen of years since it was built. Did I not, when I dined there, hear the solicitor's lady so eloquent in praise of her place—such fine fruit, and such vegetables, and not a window to overlook you!'

Our folks all thought I was crazy; but the more I pondered on it, the more the desire grew. I had long coveted a bath-room and a garden; and I do not know what foolish thing I might have done, ere I would have been baulked of my wish. Yet, high as my wife's desire was for something like a change to a country-house, the knowledge of the dreadful struggle I had so recently emerged from made her quite unhappy at the thought of spreading our wings for such a flight, and exposing ourselves to such an expense as this house would require to

furnish and maintain it. There was so much new furniture required—so much would be added to our taxes—so much money would be sunk imprudently; and altogether my wife's fears could hardly be overcome.

She could not know how well able I was now both to buy and maintain it. Yet, withal, I had such a fear of inflating the ideas of my family, that I durst not make them or my wife aware of our prosperity in its fullest extent, lest they should jump to the conclusion that we had become ladies and gentlemen, and thus take the heart out of that earnest progressive industrial education which I so ardently longed to have perfected in every one of them. I wished that in every emergency of life they might be self-reliant, either to struggle with the hardships of poverty, or enjoy judiciously all the blessings of prosperity. Oh, what a calamity it often is when something like a fortune of ten thousand pounds is left to a family! It fills the imaginations of the juveniles, enervates their minds, and breaks off and leaves unfinished that education which before was progressing so favourably. Parents cannot counteract these impressions. If they try, they are at once set down as narrow-minded, and of the old school. The girls are married for their trifle of money, and they insist on a corresponding establishment; the sons say, 'We are men of capital,' and they become comparatively vain and slothful, and the family sinks again.

I had to bring to help me the weight of my friends, Mr Grandison and Mr Liverpool; and I had to win over my wife's relations, by chiefly showing how necessary for the family health such a removal was. My solicitor himself wished me to get the house; but, in consequence of the provisions of a marriage-contract, it was offered twice for sale by public roup. One other party, who was keen for it, thought the upset price would be reduced. Meanwhile I kept out of sight; and, after the second exposure, bought it by private bargain at the upset price.

It was in late autumn when we got possession; the excitement was delightful; and it has not to this hour passed entirely away. In the warm days among the flowers, and in the moonlight evenings looking at the stars, I have great pleasure; but Sabbath morning is, and has been always to me, the opening of the day of days. Our breakfast was always over by nine o'clock, and our reading by half-past nine. There was thus a clear interval of an hour before requiring to leave

for the church; and if the weather was at all favourable, I generally spent this hour sauntering or sitting in the garden. My mind was very susceptible of serious impressions, and they were frequently awakened and heightened by the morning bells of the churches, not only of the city, but of the surrounding parishes. I came to know them all, Duddingston and Inveresk, Liberton, Corstorphine, and Cramond; and when the wind was from the north, I thought I sometimes heard the bells of Fife! They awakened reminiscences of my youth; busy memory made me review my life, and all its principal events. How much was sometimes crowded into that hour! It was sacred often to my father and my dear mother,—often to that dream I had of her, when in fancy she, with radiant countenance, was borne towards me on a low swift-sailing cloud; when our souls mingled, as it were, for a moment, and I woke up with a palpitating heart, and my eyes suffused with tears. When the easterly gale brought up in full peal the old well-known bells of Leith, I was transported in fancy to the youthful days I spent there, when my unguarded youth was in so much danger. There was one Leith bell I delighted to hear; it belonged to the church connected with the Sabbath evening school which Helen and I had for a time attended. And I still thought I heard the affectionately-toned voice of the elderly teacher; and then came the recollection of the dark cold streets, with scarcely any lamps, the east wintry wind blowing in our faces as we made for home, where our supper of nice mashed potatoes awaited us, with a drink of good beer after it. The Tron Church bell awakened feelings of the club, from which I quickly receded, thankful that that parlour thralldom had passed away for ever. The same bell served to remind me of the westerly breeze which wafted its sound after me as I sped my way to my first country lodgings.

St Giles's large bell in particular was, somehow or another, always associated in my mind with the painful thoughts of the three fine youths, M'Donald, Macintosh, and Sutherland, who were executed all at once on a platform raised in the middle of the High Street. At the very moment the drop fell, St Giles's big bell began to toll! No one who was there can ever forget these three youths, each in a clergyman's arm, with an open Bible in his hand, bare-headed and bare-necked, their neck shirt-buttons unloosed, and the collar spread over their shoulders. Sutherland, pale and genteel, with black hair; Macintosh, good-looking and ruddy, with rather reddish hair; and M'Donald, a

plain sailor-like lad in blue clothes. They were hanged for street-robbery, and the murder of a policeman. Many were robbed on that New-year's night, and I ran a risk myself.

But St Andrew's beautiful chime of six bells excelled all the others in stimulating my memory,—so many years best heard and loved by Eliza. She used to watch it every Sunday of her last sickness, and was so often soothed by its tones, that by the time they had ceased she was asleep!

Here, without being disturbed by any one, I write all my friendly letters; for I have, one way or other, about twenty regular correspondents,—some of them old acquaintances who have emigrated to remote parts of the world; some of them who have been bred in our establishment; some of them my own relatives or Mrs Meetwell's. I write my letters long, and receive from them long answers in return. You may say, What is the use of all this scribbling? I will give my view of it. I jot down, from time to time, all incidents which I think may be interesting of friends and home affairs. I praise them, if I can, with truth, for being sober, industrious, honourable, and persevering in the new world they have chosen for their home; and although I may have my suspicions about some of these points, yet I risk the counsel. Inquire particularly about all the vegetable and animal productions of their country, and about all the members of their families; and they cannot doubt the deep interest I feel in their welfare. I send them occasionally newspapers, and refer to the political relations between them and Britain, giving both parties a candid hearing, if there is any difference existing between them at the time. That these letters may occasionally be as waste paper, I have little doubt; but that many of them stir the best affections of the heart, I feel quite sure, from the returns I get full of thankfulness for them, and abounding in racy information. So good are these answers sometimes that they will bear half-a-dozen of readings. In the winter mornings, when hoar-frost prevails, and I feel that my hour is come, and that I must get up and perhaps cough for an hour or two, I put on my clothes and get into my own room. Foreseeing this want, I have always my little bundle of broken firewood at hand. I learned to light fires in Mr Stately's. In one quarter of an hour I have as much heat as I require. I cough my cough out and disturb nobody; and then, with my feet to the fire and my rug wrapped round me, I begin to think of all who have gone before me and whom I must follow soon.

Sometimes I fancy there is water about me; sometimes I fancy my heart beats irregularly; and very often I believe I am doomed to be a victim to paralysis. When I tell our doctor these thoughts, he generally laughs loudly, and says, 'You may take my word for it, you are a healthy old man; and it is very seldom indeed that what we most fear is what befalls us in the end. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." No use for you to be low-spirited when you have so much reason to be thankful.' By the time I have got all these thoughts passed through my mind, I feel inclined to doze; and after perhaps an hour in my chair with my feet to the fire, some one taps me on the shoulder: 'Papa, breakfast is ready,'—a welcome sound!

And now, on a fine day, while sitting in my garden bower, covered with heather, thus I got some notes of the fortunes of others of my old cronies.

James Cautious, my early friend, married his landlady's daughter. As I have said, the courtship began by her running to him for protection from her mother when she had offended her, and James was flattered. I saw him in London in his heyday of youth and hope. Some years after I felt vexed that I could not coax him into a correspondence. His letters were short and spiritless. I had occasion to be in London again, and I was surprised at the difference on him. He was extremely quiet and gentlemanly, but had a sad, downcast look. He was faint in his invitation of me to his house; asked me to breakfast next morning, which I hesitated to accept, making some excuse, for I was perplexed. He saw my look, and said, 'Wait till I send the lads away, and we will have a talk in my office.' The room was dark; but a window which was open to the western sky gave some light. He said he wished he had never seen London; that he never could get into the way of the people, as he was too old ere he came to it,—and other disjointed nonsense. I saw he had something on his mind, and I said, 'That signifies little to you, who have so happy a home.' He shook his head, and the whole truth came out.

His wife (with the black restless eye) was exceedingly gay, and fond of pleasure, and to go to the theatre every night she was determined on. 'I did not go with her; I had no taste that way. I thought she would tire of it. But no,—the longer the worse; she neglected our family, and I could not attend to them. She got dresses and jewellery; and one night I said, "I'm afraid you're going to run

me into debt." She laughed me off and said, "No fear of that." I noticed a very fine shawl, and said, "That cost money; and that diamond ring,—these together must have cost you thirty guineas, for I know something about these things." She laughed, and said, "We'll talk of that another time, for I'm going out." I said, "No; I want to have a talk with you to-night." She said she must go out, and would. I rose and turned the key, and put it in my pocket. What a look she threw me with those eyes! She would give me no satisfaction, nor promise to look after her children. "I'll do as I like, that you may rely on." She sat there dressed, and I did the same, till four o'clock in the morning; and then I opened the door, when she flew into her bedroom, crying bitterly, and locked herself in, and I made a bed in the sofa till it was time to get up for the day. This night I may say broke my spirit, if it did not break my heart. Ever after, if she fawned on me, I was sure she wanted to carry some point with me. And she must have her wine to dinner, too, every day! Personal vanity has been her and my ruin, and that of our family, for they grow up here so impudent. My son, only twelve years of age past, speaks of me as the "old codger; what does he know of London life?" I heard him at this the other day. And she does as she likes, as she said she would.' Looking me in the face, 'It's all over, James; my life is a burden to me, I wish I could lay it down now. If I could do good by any means, I would play the man yet; but she is so determined, and so clever, and so proud and inflexible—for she has many flatterers—that I have not the least chance. I long for death,—I do,—and I think I feel its approach! How different, how very different, is life since I was your uncle's assistant!' Tears ran over his cheeks as he wrung my hand at parting. He died two years after, and left a little money; but, as I heard, it did not last above two years, and I have heard no more of them ever since, and did not care to inquire.

My dear and esteemed friend Mr Meadows saw a long age of eighty years. He was aware how much he owed to Mary, who had remained single for her father and mother's sake; and although his sons were disappointed, he got a new lease in favour of himself, whom failing, his daughter; but, in fact, she entered on the lease with his consent at the very beginning. Everything was valued over to her, and a settlement made. Mary had long kept all the accounts; and now, with the assistance of excellent servants, well treated and sharply

looked after, she is one of the very best farmers in the parish. The last time I saw the old couple in life I was so struck with their appearance, that I wrote it down at the time. He was bent forward, but his back was straight: his waistcoat all flying open below, for he said he could bear no buttons there. He was cutting a little bog grass, as he said, 'For our coo's supper: for ye see our wife has her ain coo and her ain pig, an' it's employment to me an' her baith. Yonder she is on the braeside, sitting waiting me, for she cannot let me as minute out o' her sight.' Poor body, there she was in very low spirits.—a habit become constitutional. Hers was a very vacant mind: her religious theory did not connect very well with the world around her, and she dwelt on the same limited extent of ideas till they were worn threadbare, and yielded her no food for the mind at all, and she saw everything in a gloomy light. Mr Meadows could not get her left anywhere; she would follow him, and watch him, and wait for him, and aye her salutation was: 'Oh, but what garred ye stay sae lang away?' It was a sad sight indeed to see her once comely face all so dismal. Oftentimes she could not muster courage to speak; and her dark suspicious glances said, as plainly as aught could, Let me alone, do not trouble me. Yet he was a faithful and loving husband to her, and soothed her as well as he could.

How little was left of life's enjoyments! They were ripe for the sickle. One or two years after, in the middle of a snow-storm, I was summoned to his funeral. He had just worn away,—grew weaker and weaker, and at last he lay down, and in four days after breathed his last. I had been unwell, and had kept the house for five days. My system was all disordered, but I was a little better. Although not in the habit of sending for my letters on Sabbath, I did this day. The funeral was on Tuesday, and I was expected. The snow lay on the ground a foot deep, and all was frozen with a hard skin, a sharp wintry wind prevailing. I sent for our doctor, and he gave me leave to go. I was cowardly, for I was very weak. I had on one of these stiff drab greatcoats; very cumbrous, but how little heat was in them! The train stuck and stuck again, and it was two hours behind ere I got to the station. I had two miles and a half to walk. A stout lad carried my portmanteau. The road was deeply tracked and broken by horses' feet in the middle, so that, being frozen hard, it was most unpleasant to walk upon; and the lad said briskly, 'We will be better through the fields,' and away he went. At every step the crust broke.

I found this very fatiguing, and I called out to him to stop; for with my weakness, and the cumber of my greatcoat, I had the perspiration running down the sides of my head. It was half-past ten P.M., and I knew all would be bedded at Ferlieknowes; so I consulted with the lad, who said, 'The folk at the Auld Inn wadna be beddit yet.' So I turned aside a quarter of a mile; and as there was no fire elsewhere, sat a quarter of an hour in the kitchen, swallowed slowly a glass of stiff toddy, and got to bed with half my clothes on, for it was not over nice. Got up at seven o'clock next morning, and arrived at Ferlieknowes after another fatiguing walk of an hour, and was in time for breakfast. I was quite dispirited at my weakness; but after a good breakfast, and a good rest, and shifting and shaving, I felt wonderfully revived, and was able to entertain all early-comers. The two sons arrived an hour before the funeral. They of course occupied the place of chief mourners; but they had nothing to do. Mary had neighbours appointed, each more willing than another, to take in horses, and wait in the barn for the common people, and in the house on the farmers and relatives. I had been so often there, I knew every one almost, and found myself a person of considerable importance. The parish minister did duty in the house, and the worthy seceder in the barn. All lamented the death of one who had so well done his duty in all respects, public and private, in church matters and parish matters, as a neighbour and a friend, a husband and a father; but all acquiesced that he had had a long day, and had come to his grave like a shock of corn fully ripe; and all acknowledged, too, that his place was well supplied by his spirited daughter, who would not fail her father in any respect.

We had only a mile and a half to walk to the kirkyard. Eight stout young men, with great strides, set out with the light coffin on two spokes, and by-and-by I found myself among the old men bringing up the rear. It was no use to ask them to walk slower; for the young men at the spokes were relieved every ten minutes by others, and I was a quarter of a mile behind the coffin when the procession stopped till all came up, and I helped to lower the light remains of my dear old friend into his narrow house. I took a long time to dry my reeking head; and a gentleman observing it, whose gig was waiting, drove me a mile back, although quite out of his way. The brothers were told they would see the settlement in Standfast's office in the county town on the market day, and the nature of it was briefly ex-

plained to them. They got what they deserved. The dinner passed off in the usual manner,—a good substantial one,—kail and beef, and stewed fowls, and baked potatoes, a dram, two glasses of whisky in punch, and all were off by six P.M. I was now for the first time introduced to the widow. She preferred being in her own little room. There were a dozen of females with her. The little room was like an oven, and the old woman's colour was raised very high, as she sat in her easy-chair by the fireside as if she were immovable. I spoke to her and took her hand, but I got no response. She looked askance at me, and yet we were always good friends. Finding I could elicit no feeling from her, I left her. By eight o'clock all were cleared away, and I was left alone with Mary to range over a multitude of subjects in which we both felt a mutual interest. She was always excellent company, having such a fertile mind and so discriminating. I got an excellent sleep in my old bed, and was remarkably well next day. With her usual respectful attention, she had provided a gig to drive me and my box down to the station at two o'clock. All my people at home were delighted to see me back so well.

Two years after Mrs Meadows died. She never came out of her apathy. Sometimes she would ask a question, but very seldom. I sent my son in my place to her funeral, as it was very wet weather. As for Miss Meadows, she continues the same sprightly evergreen,—shrewd, witty, and active. She is a blessing to the poor; but no one of them would venture to try to deceive her; and at this time when I write I do not know any lady of her age that looks so well.

My dear friend Nobleman continued to persevere in his old way. All the blessings of life were in his possession,—warm-hearted friends, an affectionate wife, a large first and second family, several of them respectably married, and at all of whose firesides stood his welcome easy-chair. Yet, for all, nothing could conceal from him that he was not A1 now. Younger men had grown up all around him, representing younger houses; fashions had changed, and he was decidedly behind the day. Old friends were more talkative, too, than intent on business; and as his remittances dwindled away in amount, he grew faint-hearted, and looked upon himself as a broken-down man. First-class hotel expenses were beyond his means now; and I looked out a central place for him, where, for a pound a week, he might make his rendezvous—a nice room, twenty by sixteen feet, with two windows. But it was up two pair of stairs, or the second storey above the shops.

When all his patterns and samples were here arrayed, he looked happy-like, and the kindness of the landlady touched him too ; but he felt it as if it were pity. He could not be the confident lordly one whose word was law. Yet his friends came to see him here, had their glass of toddy out of his own private bottle, and gave him their orders out of sympathy. Small, heartless orders they were. They came to little money. Often and again his friends had offered to support him. This stung him : 'Support me !' and as the consciousness of his growing imbecility came upon him with a force not to be resisted, he would sink in despondency, and hot tears would course over his cheeks for ten minutes at a time. He used to sum up the injuries he had done to his constitution by his course of life. 'I have lived fast,' he would say ; 'fifty miles on the top of a stage-coach, in the darkness of the morning or night, in frost or snow or rain, was nothing to me. I might go to bed at midnight ; but I could rise at five o'clock every morning, and did so in summer always. I wrought for, and won a great deal of money. I might have been worth my twenty thousand pounds if I had been as wise thirty years ago as I am to-day. And I would have been a burden to no one, but would have been respected in my old age, and an honour and a credit to all belonging to me.' Here his voice always faltered.

Again, in a whisper, and after a pause—'Do you know the names that Mr Sinister called me at that meeting ?'

'Oh, why, Mr N., will you revert to that ? it's a dozen of years ago.'

'Cannot help it, James.'

'Well, pass it over.'

'There was a time when in your proud city here I could have dined out every day for a month. Nobody asks me now, James. I dined out and dined in far too much ; yet no one ever saw me the worse of liquor. I could carry my wine as well as any man. But you know as well as any how I was beset at my hotel. Sometimes one, sometimes two or three, would be waiting me, and all had some business to do with me, which I would have preferred doing at their own desks when I called ; but there was so much friendship mixed up with it, I could not find in my heart to do away with so pleasant a tribute. I knew it was my company they wanted to enjoy for an hour or two : so we had our Welsh rabbit, and then we had our toddy ; and you must allow, James, you Scotch folks have a fashion that a man must drink glass about, and I

was forced to comply. When I told them roundly I would give them no more, what did they do? Oh, they would treat me now, and forthwith order in another bowl; and then there were cigars, and, in short, I was far on to be fou, as you say. What a rage I was in next morning at myself, and at them, and at everybody! But I had got into it, and could not get out of it; and I know I am now ten years older than I should have been, but for this dissipated life. But it's nearly over now; and I seem to myself like a man who at sixty years of age awakens as if from a dream. He looks back on the road he has come, the wrong road leading to misery and disappointment; and he sees also the other road, the straight, steep road, which, in the noon of life, I could have surmounted so easily, and it would have led me to an old age of honour and usefulness, influence and competence. And now, I'm but a poor worn-out broom, fit for nothing but to be cast into the fire.'

I combated these thoughts successfully I hope. I told him how much he had to be thankful for; that few had so much as he had, or so full a cup to bless God for. I told him he was proud; that he ought to humble himself in his present condition, and not turn away from all the good things God had left him; to go home, and he would meet his faithful friend, his wife, who, by his own confession, had supported and cheered him under all his troubles. He would also see his large family, and his sons-in-law, and his daughters-in-law—a race which any man might be proud of.

'Enough, enough, James,' he would cry; 'I am a foolish man, you have opened my eyes. I must go to my knees to thank God, and ask pardon for my pride.'

'Stop a little,' I said; 'I am not done yet. Do you take me for your friend?'

'Oh! how can you ask that, my dear fellow?'

'And Mr Chevalier, is he not a true friend?'

'I have proved him, James; there is not a kinder-hearted or more respectable man lives.'

'Well, then, you know a dozen such.' I enumerated them, and, as one would have supposed, I left him quite converted. Next morning he would be back into the very same spot, and have the same weak array of thoughts in full possession of his mind. The fact was, he had said truly, the life of excitement he had led had worn him prematurely out.

Of my dear friend Mr Liverpool I have now to write.

I left him in the full career of prosperity, active in every friendly and benevolent work; dearly beloved by all who knew him for his kind-heartedness and cheerfulness, and highly esteemed for the thorough way in which he performed every public duty. He lost his wife after a lingering illness; and a great loss she was to him, as was afterwards seen. Her place was not filled up at all, for Mr Liverpool contented himself with retaining an elderly lass who had been with them for twenty years. He was now a man of fifty years of age. His customers had been dropping off by death, and their places were not filled up. He became a little easy and careless. Formerly, and while his wife was alive, he would never stop out a minute beyond the ten o'clock bell, or drink more than one bottle of stout, or if it was punch, he would not exceed two tumblers. Now all these rules were disregarded. He and I were asked to drink tea with a very respectable lady. She bought all her necessaries from him, and in anticipation of her yearly income of fifty pounds per quarter, he advanced her as freely as if her banker. She was ever one of the very best friends of my family; so wise, handy, and judicious. Well, just as we finished our congou from the beautiful solid silver teapot, shining so bright, our friend, after a few premonitory nods, dropt fast asleep. As soon as our hostess saw it, she gave a slight sorrowful shake of the head, and observed, 'Honest man, he's been tasting.' He slept twenty minutes, and we continued talking in an even, monotonous tone. We took no notice of his nap, and he took none himself; so we conversed till we heard the eight o'clock bell. Our hostess had a saying: 'Na, na, wha winna gie us their crack for twa hours after their tea, does not deserve any!' Her hour was now come, and whisky, hot water, and sugar were soon on the table, and welcome. By nine o'clock we had discussed our two tumblers and were off.

I was now out of my difficulties; and although I continued to buy my necessaries from Mr Liverpool, at least the greater part of them, we were not quite so intimate as before. I was drawing out of drinking usages, and he was sliding in rather deeper. One day I was in a neighbour's place of business, and in conversation he said—

'Oh! your friend Mr Liverpool is going into the whisky trade.'

'That's not very likely,' was my reply. 'You must be mistaken.'

'I do not think it,' was the answer. 'But you can soon make sure.'

'So I will,' I said; and I hastened to Mr Liverpool's warehouse.

His usual frank 'How do you do, friend?' was answered as frankly; and then I said, 'I've been hearing news, but I do not believe it; you, however, can correct me. Your neighbour Rightabout says you are going into the wine and spirit trade!'

'Why should that surprise you? Is there anything wrong in it?'

Almost choked with a tone he had never taken with me before, I replied with the utmost gravity, 'Well, Mr Liverpool, if you think you can venture into that line of business, I can only say that it is more than I would risk myself. I have always had a struggle to keep drink at arm's length.' Looking gravely offended, he said, drawing himself up—

'I hope we will be able to take care of ourselves.'

I rejoined, 'I hope so,' and walked off deeply mortified, and our friendship was at an end. He never was easy with me again.

I bought from him as before, and sometimes a small quantum of his liquors; for I would not wish that any man should have it in his power to say I gave an old friend the cold shoulder, or was ungrateful. His liquor trade did very well for him; he may have cleared three hundred pounds a year by it; and perhaps he needed an addition to his income at that period. Time wore on. His original trade of agricultural implements and seeds was almost extinct; his grocery trade was but a small retail one; and his spirit, wine, ale and porter trade was his support. At this time a singular misfortune befell him. A large dog, who had been kept back out of sport while his master was walking quickly away, flew down the street to join him. Our friend Mr Liverpool was stepping out of a shop to cross the street; the dog came against him with such force that he was turned right round and thrown down, and there he lay with a dislocated ankle and some of the small bones broken. He was never able to walk again so as to make the limb serve for bodily exercise,—a great misfortune to an old man, for bodily exercise becomes so essential to his health that the want of it soon tells on the system. He had a large room or hall which used to be occupied by his large stock of agricultural implements, sacks of seeds, and other things put there to be out of the way. By-and-by an acquaintance would call.

'Have you any back place, Mr Liverpool?'

'Well, it's rather rough, but it will do.'

'A gill of brandy for you and me.'

Mr Liverpool always liked to be treated. This trade grew. The

place was never altered ; but first one thing and then another was removed, and a cask, a table, and some deals were laid to make parties quite comfortable as they lounged in old arm-chairs or on empty boxes, till the very novelty of the place became delightful, amidst the smell of oranges, sugar, cheese, and sawdust. It was, however, an exclusive place ; no one but the initiated were admitted ; and here on a summer's evening or a winter's night, in this free-and-easy, you would find a dozen of loungers (no hot water allowed), bailies, doctors, bakers and butchers, writers, etc. It was so respectable to go into a grocer's shop, and come out either by the front or by a side door in a close ! This room was worth one hundred and fifty pounds a year to Mr Liverpool.

The same man, Mr Rightabout, who told me of Mr Liverpool's intention to take up the wine and spirit trade, met me almost on the same spot five years afterwards.

'What do you think of your friend Mr Liverpool now ? You would not believe me when I told you he was going into the whisky trade ; and what has it come to ? That back-room of his—we call it the Liverpool Slaughter-House. Man, we had rare fun with him last night. We gave his old cat snuff, and he was in such a rage !'

Here I could restrain myself no longer, but exclaimed angrily, 'Then you made fun of a better man than yourself.'

'I don't know that,' said Rightabout. 'If a man gets maudlin every night, and pretends to be respectable, and lectures other people, i'faith but he is fair game, and we will hold him as such.'

Sometimes I would, in going home, order a few groceries, etc., and would be asked into the sanctum. He was often well spiced by seven P.M. ; and when forced to come forward to face a lady or respectable grocery customer, his red face and thick speech told too truly how he had been employed.

He had long been actively and usefully employed as the treasurer for the benevolent society called by a name I will not give. Every respectable person almost was a subscriber. I was one. Knowing this, he sent for me, and asked me if I would attend their annual meeting, as he had sent in his resignation, and I would hear what was said, and let him know. The rewards of merit were the society's gold medal, their silver medal, and, least of all, a vote of thanks. The mild president was about proposing the silver medal to be sent to Mr Liverpool, when an active gentleman stepped forward and said, 'Would you

bestow your silver medal on a man who—I move that Mr Liverpool be rewarded for his long and faithful services to this institution with the best thanks of the president and directors, to be engrossed in our minutes, and a copy to be sent to him.' When I told my friend,—for so I will call him,—he was silent. By-and-by he wiped away a tear, but said not one word. All his golden anticipations were blasted. Sixteen years of service, worth twenty pounds a year, and thanks only! I certainly felt very much for him, but durst not amplify.

He had some dear friends in the parish of Cockpen or the next parish, I do not know which. He was thirteen years older than I was, and had been for some time poorly. He had a notion that if he was out at Cockpen in the then fine summer weather, he would be all right in no time. He had occasional fits of a choking-like cough, and I think he had liver complaint and dropsical swellings, but I was never told pointedly what was the matter. I went to see him, and had tea with him and his friends. I do not know if he was glad to see me or not, but he was much moved, and put his handkerchief to his eyes very often. He was, of all ever I knew, either male or female, the most tender-hearted. I quite forget our discourse. He was in an easy-chair, and took only half a cup of tea. We conversed very little, and to break the awkwardness of silence, I talked away of everything I could think of. Some may say, Did you not speak to him of death? Well, I did not; and, indeed, I do not much favour casual acquaintances dunning these thoughts into an invalid's ear, especially when they are quite aware themselves that they are dying. There can be little doubt that they feel an intense interest in the world and the friends they are about to leave; their hearts cling to them, and it is not the time to break in upon tender thoughts and heart-swelling farewells. There is time and place for everything. I can fancy the pain-tossed invalid gasping for breath, saying mentally to his friends, 'Oh, let me alone; do not take the fresh air from me by your presence; do not make a spectacle of me.' And in the stillness of his sick chamber, when his loving nurse, wife, sister, or daughter, says, 'Now you are all comfortable, do you think you will sleep?' 'I will try; I will be glad if I can get a sleep. But will you read the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel to me, and if I fall asleep while you are reading do not disturb me.' It is in such moments as these that the soul yields itself up to its Saviour and its God: 'Into thy hands I commit my spirit.' Some time ere I left, I had been casting furtive glances at my dear friend,

conscious they would be the last. His hand shaded his face very slowly. I saw his fingers open until an eye, brimfull of tears, said, 'Farewell!'

I am sorry to wind up my list of friends, 'not lost, but gone before,' by the name of Grandison. By course of nature and constitution of body, and ruddy healthful appearance, he should have been ten years in the world behind me, yet he is gone before me! His sun went down at noon. He was fond of horse-racing, and went here and there to see these spectacles. From being tall, thin, and elegant rather in appearance, he had filled up, and was now almost portly. His vital machinery was getting cramped for want of room, all spare corners were filled up by deposits of fat. He told me how instantly he would have to stop when trying to walk quick, as his custom was, and added, 'He could not understand it.' It was understood after. That wonderful machine which begins with its alternate valves to open and shut at our birth, giving indications at one pulse of from fifty to one hundred pulsations or openings and shuttings every minute of our lives, and continues on to threescore and ten or fourscore without stoppage, without repair,—for a stoppage of one minute would be death,—this wonderfully vital part of our friend had been clogged with fat. He was at Summertime races, and as he was a great admirer of horses, he sometimes would lay a few bets of moderate amount, such as would not break his heart although he lost. He was viewing the race as the blue and the red jacket came up to the winning-post almost neck and neck. 'Blue has it!' he exclaimed, and almost immediately he laid hold of a friend's arm, who, looking in his face, was alarmed at its expression,—he seemed gasping for breath. A little brandy gave him temporary relief, and he made out to get into the railway train, but he expired an hour after he reached home. He was taken away some years before Wittyman, who rushed into my place of business at nine o'clock next morning:

'James,' he exclaimed, 'Lord, man, Grandison's gone!'

I jumped off my stool and collared him: 'What did you say?'

'Oh, man, Grandison's gone! He died last night in his own house after coming home from Summertime races. I saw the doctor; it's too true. What a fine fellow,—so healthy and strong-like,—cut down in an hour! He should have buried you and me by rights.'

We sat down and indulged our feelings for an hour; calling to mind the many instances of his manly, honourable, outspoken conduct,—his ready, humorous, and fit answers,—his promptitude in succouring

the distressed and deserving, and the habitual cheerfulness of his countenance,—his white teeth and ringing laugh. Often did we say we would never see his like again. Wittyman remembered with much relish the curt way in which he put down Despot, in his memorable ‘Speak for yourself, Despot,’ etc. And I narrated the happy day for me when he called to offer me as much capital as I required. His widow and family had powerful and rich relations, and wished rather a select funeral; but about twenty of us hired six coaches to follow his remains to the grave, and we were much pleased to hear that his widow took the compliment kindly, and was so much gratified that she caused her uncle to call on me and say so, that I might tell all the rest.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MY SON CHARLES.

As the aim of all I have written is, that it may be useful to others, I cannot omit to note my experience with our son Charles. From his earliest youth he had a will of his own, great vivacity, was somewhat selfish, and impatient of contradiction. One would have thought such a character was not likely to be a favourite; but he was—always was—even with the maids and his sisters, although the young little fellow bent them to his will; yet such was his amusing vivacity, his playfulness and ingenuity, that, young as he was, he charmed them somehow; and they bore with him, screened him from punishment, and made excuses for him. He did not want talent, yet he preferred play immeasurably to tasks or learning. But when there was a strong reward in prospect, such as a jaunt or a party, he would set himself down, and in one hour perform as much good work as would have taken a decent dunce four times as long. I have said that every one had pleasure in the little fellow, and every one liked him except his parents and his teachers; and with them he was at everlasting war. He was insatiable of play. When we meant to have watched him on his holidays, that he might learn his tasks ere he was allowed to go,—whew! he was up and off early in the morning. All the boys were fond of him too. In making up any play, Charlie was indis-

pensable if he could be got. From children's picture-books, which he could eloquently explain to the amusement of all, he rose to marbles, shinty, an enormous kite made by ten of them, which one could not hold. Then a ship,—not a toy, but a good mimic ship. In summer, boats were got to borrow, some of the boys at the school having influence or money; and somehow when they wanted a boat they always got one.

One day when I was determined to know how, and where, and in what company he had passed the whole Saturday, I picked out of him that nine of them had got a boat, none of them above fifteen, and had gone down seven miles with the ebb-tide, and returned with the flood. They had some bread with them; or rather, one brought bread, another cheese, a third a piece of cold beef. They had potatoes to roast, coals and sticks for kindling fire in a kind of brasier, and they tried to roast the fish they had caught; so they made a day of it, sure enough. It was difficult for me to keep my gravity. In the bathing season he was at the sea every day if fine, and he was always well attended. During all this time I never saw my boy to any advantage; never saw him as others saw him, in the animation of his play. My eyes were opened in a summer when we were in the country. A very clever and a very fine boy became inseparable companion to my Charlie; and every one in that quarter spoke of him with pleasure, he was such a merry fellow, riding on horses or anything else; hunting rats or rabbits, or whatever he could pursue. When the word was passed that Duddingston was bearing, he would slip out his skates at breakfast, and get a double allowance of provender from the females quietly; and if it was moonlight, he would not return perhaps till ten o'clock, and be in his bed before any one knew he had returned. He was twice nearly drowned, and once got his face scorched with gunpowder. His master was exasperated, for he saw he was clever, but so idle, that if there was any trick going on, Charlie was a party to it, or was supposed to be, and was punished often, I do believe, when he was innocent. I had repeated interviews with the masters; remonstrated on the bad effects of frequent punishments, and got a promise from them that they would not flog again, as I agreed rather to come along with him and cause him apologize before the whole school. This had a good effect for a time; but I saw that he was 'a marked man,' and surrounded as he was by boys, I resolved to take him away, and give him a fair chance somewhere else.

I was at a loss, knowing so many people over the country; and having the acquaintance of a nice man who kept the parish school of Whitemoors, in the south, he agreed to take Charles at once. The winter time is the busy time in country parishes; and as he went at the first of October, he must have felt the change very much. He confessed he did; the lads were so different, and his food was so different. The master's wife was a poor cook, and potatoes were easily boiled. There was meal and milk, but little butcher meat. He felt very dull and sad for a time, as his weekly letters testified; but in these letters I had a great satisfaction, for I saw at once that his education had not been lost; he expressed so much, and expressed it so well, and in small compass, that his letters were almost classical. The master judiciously appointed Charles as his helper, and flattered him by telling him truly how much better he was of his assistance; and he was better of him in another respect, for he was excellent company for the master, whose own family were very young. Charles told me after how much he had learnt from the master of the native qualities and usefulness of the various trees with which the neighbourhood abounded; how bridges were built, and many other matters which fell under their notice in their Saturday walks.

The whole house petitioned for him to be allowed to come home and spend his Christmas; and, in fact, I yearned for it myself, for we never had bad feeling towards each other. When we were at the worst, and I was exasperated at one time to try personal chastisement and had begun, my hand was arrested: 'Papa, papa, take care; you are too angry just now; you'll hurt me, and you will be sorry for it afterwards.' I was disarmed, and glad to be so; and I was bound to take into account that he never gave me an impudent answer, nor told me a lie. But when I knew that amongst their amusements were included tobacco-pipes, pistols, gunpowder, and whisky,—the while, too, drawing near to manhood,—parents will sympathize with me, and appreciate the justice of my fears. How glad I am that I kept a fast hold of his affections, and that I am sure he loved and respected me even when matters were at the worst with us. He came home, and we did enjoy our holidays!

He was sad at leaving our warm, comfortable, lively home for his moorland abode, where every enjoyment was inferior—food, society, bed, etc. But he was a manly young stripling. It sweetened his return to the dull country where he lived, that he had a second

quarter's payment for the master, who was not out of the need of it. A month after, he wrote me that he could not endure his country life any longer; that he was now of an age to begin to do something for himself; and he besought me not to deny him his liberty at the end of the half-year, so as he might leave at 1st April, 'For,' he said, 'I need not disguise from you that every one around construes my being at Whitemoors into a sort of voluntary banishment, and would fain know the cause.' Struck with the candour and reasonableness of the appeal, I complied at once, and desired him to consider well what he would like to follow after. I stated that in my own mind I had destined him to go into the counting-house of my correspondents Messrs Thoroughgood Brothers, of Liverpool; that I had been feeling my way already, and that he could be so comfortably boarded with our cousin the widow, who resided there, and had one son about his own age.

The 1st of April came, and with it Charles, a much wiser man than before. He shunned the boys who were his former associates, as much for fear of their impertinent questions as anything else; but he did not shun my company as before; and to relieve the tedium of the weeks we spent in consultation, I gave him copying to do. I felt very much for him. He was sensible he had neglected his education, and was far behind. We spoke of a lawyer's office or a clerk in a bank. He answered he was not fit for these, and would not like to try them; he could not think of sitting on a stool. Would he like to go into our own business? although he had two brothers in it already, we would make room for him. No, he had no desire that way; and, after some hesitation, he said he would like to see the world, and he stole a glance at me. I paused a little, and then said—

'Do you mean that you would like to be a sailor?'

'As well as anything I know,' was the answer.

'But you cannot become a sailor without learning it. You must serve an apprenticeship.'

'I know.'

'But have you any proper idea of the hardships of an apprentice sailor?'

'I think I have.'

'How can you?'

'Oh, Tom Black and Willie Craig have both brothers sailors, and

they told me all about them; and I've been on board Black's ship when she was here, and he likes the sea fine.'

'But you are not a strong man to bear wet, and cold, and hard labour, and a vertical sun.'

'I must just take my chance like others.'

'Would you like to go into the coasting trade?'

'No; it's very dangerous, and aye the same thing over again.' His mouth was now opened. 'I would like to go a trading voyage, although it took me round the world, and I did not come back for a year or two.'

This crowned the matter, and settled my mind to let him have his own way, as his thoughts seemed so well made up to it. But what a to-do there was when the word broke out that Charlie was to be a sailor! All were at him—mother, brothers, sisters, and acquaintances. But he beat them off with 'I must just take my chance; what more I than any one else? I'll soon get accustomed to it, and the sooner if I am sure I cannot get away from it. There will be aye something new at any rate, and that's better than standing behind a counter, or sitting on a three-legged stool with a pen behind your ear all the days of your life. Don't bother me any more about it; I will tell you all when I come back. Don't people die at home? Well, if I am drowned, it has been many a better man's fate before me. We can die but once.' I admired his spirit; for having once hoisted his colours, he would not flinch. His determination of character was evident; and it was all the harder for him to bear, leaving such a comfortable home.

The die being now cast, there was no end of talk and of preparation. Knowing that the character of a young man may be moulded for good or for evil by the company he falls into at first, I was most anxious to have Charles put under a good captain. We knew of one, and had often heard of Captain Manly of our own city, one of the first captains now in the service of one of the London foreign trading companies. He was in port, but declined to take Charles. As he said, when a lad was bound to the owners, he had no more responsibility connected with him; but when he was bound to himself, he considered he was to see to him at sea and ashore, and if he changed his ship, to take him with him. Captain Manly had always one of the best ships out of fifty belonging to his extensive company. He was senior captain, if not in years, in estimation,—a careful and skilful navigator, a

rigid disciplinarian, a gentleman in his manners, and noted for quick and prosperous voyages. He knew all the currents of trade—what would and what would not suit the various ports he was bound to. His apprentices always came to good; this was well known. We would not take his refusal. We obtained access to an influential friend of his, who wrote him that Charles and his father were coming up to London, and he must not refuse him a place, as he valued his friendship. But our friend said, 'Observe my P.S.: Mr Meetwell is ready to comply with all reasonable stipulations, which I have explained to him.' Charles and myself went up by steam. I enjoyed his animation and intense curiosity. He seemed to have grown taller already. But we were both a little ashamed of the size and weight of his sea-chest. It was the object of some merriment: one said it surely belonged to some commodore; some called it Noah's Ark; and as the sailors of the steamer, who knew all about us, said, in sailor's grammar, 'It's plenty big enough anyhow.'

We met Captain Manly. 'Your son is very light for a rope's end! Is he healthy?'

Being made aware that he had always been so, he said he would think about it: 'But there are so many applications.'

We did not like to hear this, and visited the ship day after day. At last I pressed Captain Manly. He answered he could not think of having my son bound to himself, for it might not be in his power to take him with him at all times, so many unlooked-for changes took place. Ultimately he consented, and promised to take as much care of him as if he were his own son; but it cost me a bribe, for I cannot justly call it by any other name, of one hundred and five pounds.

Knowing we were to part in a few days, I now felt a happiness in my young man's company I had never experienced before; he was so animated and so affectionate, and withal so intelligent—able to explain the position of every point of London surprisingly soon; and he seemed to see through everything at a glance. At last I saw his chest on board the 'Diamond,' of twelve hundred tons, Captain Manly; got introduced to the mate, a smart, resolute fellow, who hardly responded to my advances, yet he accepted the little present Charlie gave him. The vessel was to sail in three days; and now he was fairly booked, so I bade him farewell. His look and the convulsive pressure of my hand thrilled to my heart! I saw he was quite sensible that I had done all in my power for him. I need not say

what a solace it was; parents alone can estimate it aright. He wrote us by every vessel they met, and from every port they touched at; and his letters, clear, animated, and descriptive, were well read, for many were the inquiries after Charlie. We, on our part, wrote him two for one, and sent him newspapers as well. He was bitterly angry when he arrived at any port and there were no letters for him; but it was never our fault. He made no complaint of hardships in his letters, which on the whole were quite cheerful.

It was the evening of the first Sabbath of the New-year. Our reading was just over, and the lasses were in the lobby, retiring to the kitchen, when the door-bell was rung, and answered almost immediately; then there was a scuffling noise and half a shriek, and then 'Eh, Mary, don't you know Charlie?' What a rush there was to the lobby; chairs knocked over and left lying! Such happiness, such laughing, such questioning! I left them towards midnight, and don't know when the youngsters got to bed. He had been twenty-one months away, and had arrived at the door while we were engaged in worship, and waited for its conclusion. After the excitement was over, and a week had elapsed, and all friends had been visited, he seemed to settle down into a state of inaction. It was soft, dull weather, and there was no skating or sliding. He seemed to like the fireside and an amusing book. He had two months' leave of absence. We spoke of navigation. 'Time enough for that,' was his brief answer. He ultimately seemed very lazy and taciturn. I could read his thoughts. He found that to be an apprentice sailor was very different from what he had so fondly imagined. After the sum which he knew I had paid to secure him a good captain, to abandon the sea now was out of the question; yet I was afraid he might, and if so, I hardly saw my way to what might follow. He was so sensitive, that I was sure he could not endure to be called 'a sticket sailor.' His great sea-chest, when it arrived, oh! it was such a mess, to be sure; everything hashed and dirty, many garments lost, and a few given away. He could not stand his mother's cross-examination about this, and that, and the other thing. 'You know nothing about it, mother; and I knew nothing about it either till I tried it; and if you saw any other fellow's chest, you would find it as bad as mine, for we are all hashes together, and that's the end o't!' I tried to interest him to make a perspective view of our new house, which we had just entered, for he was a tolerable hand at the pencil. He gave me an inarticulate answer, and did

not do it. This will never do, thought I. I cannot allow this contempt of orders. 'Charles, I will thank you to have that sketch of the house ready for me by mid-day of Wednesday.' He gave me a look, and I gave him a glance. The sketch was produced within time, and I was very well pleased with it; I have it yet. Captain Manly came down also to see his friends; and, of course, we had him to dinner, and our friend who had interested him in our favour. We had excellent conversation; and the captain, in answer to his mother's repeated inquiries, looking archly at Charles, said, 'Oh, Charles and I got on very well, very well, indeed! Did we not, Charles?' Charles gave him an imploring look, and he proceeded no further. His leave of absence expired, and in the same sad, dogged spirit he went to sea again. When he got to London he was deeply mortified to find that Captain Manly was not to go out with the 'Diamond.' His mate was put in command. Now, this mate bore Charles no goodwill, for he had thought Captain Manly was partial to him. One morning he had set him to a very coarse dirty job, and when the captain came on deck, he asked Charles who set him to that work. 'The mate, sir.' The captain spoke to the mate, and the mate gave Charles a look, as much as—See if I don't pay you off for this. And now he was commander, for Mr Manly's health was a little broken; and besides, there was a fine new vessel preparing for him, which he was asked to stay at home and fit up to his mind. I do not know if ever Charles had said anything bitter to his former mate. He could do it if he liked, and he might have pleaded that he was bound to Mr Manly, but it would have looked ill; so he made a virtue of necessity, and went with the 'Diamond' again. I have again and again shown that Charles was lazy, and I am not aware that his new commander used him otherwise than he did the others; but he made no exception in his favour, and if asked would have, no doubt, answered, Why should he? He was, however, very uncomfortable on this voyage, for he had not the companionship he formerly had. He was forward among the men; and he said afterwards, 'Oh, you have no idea how coarse and unfeeling they are.' They made very free with everything he had; borrowed or took what they pleased, and never gave them back.

On this miserable voyage he suffered much, both from heat and cold. It was a very quick one; they accomplished in twelve months what used to take fifteen or sixteen months. The captain carried sail to the uttermost; he was bent on making a character to himself;

wrought the crew very hard; carried his point, and made the 'Diamond' do what she never did before. He was extremely glad when he got home a second time; and having now the prospect of going with Captain Manly in his new ship, set to work to learn navigation with cheerfulness. But he was much humbled now, more timidly respectful to those in any way above him; and while I felt for him and the coarse usage he had suffered, we all remarked, with much feeling, how thoughtful and how manly he had become. He was no longer lazy; he jumped at any request, and, in short, was ready and obliging. Again he set off the third time, and, as compared with the former voyage, had a golden time of it. The new ship and the old captain made a great change to him. Besides, his time ran out, and he was appointed to something like third mate of a fourteen hundred ton ship, subject to the approval of the Board on his return home. When he came home the third time, we knew a great difference upon him; he was gentlemanly and happy, and set to his navigation at once. He would now have been lionized, but he did not like it. He had lost all his forwardness, and was now intent on mental culture. He saw his brothers and sisters so well educated, and he felt anxious not to be behind them if possible. He had seen the world now, and that to some purpose.

'When do you go to dinner to-day?'

'At the usual hour. Why do you ask?'

'Oh, nothing at all; only I can have a freer talk with you as we walk along than at any other time.'

He did not know the pleasure I felt when, in this artless way, he made me know that he felt happy in my company. It thrilled me with pleasure to think that one I had so anxiously watched over was now almost all I could wish. Little do juveniles know how sweet to a parent's heart it is to live in the affections of their children; and, on the other part, 'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!' It is surely bitter to receive an ungrateful return from your own children. I have never had that painful feeling. Indeed, I do not recollect that ever I was seriously angry at any of them. What I mean by that is, such anger as I would have felt if any one of them had put me at defiance, or said he or she did not care for my words or opinion, or had spoken impudently to me, or treated me with contempt, or *intentionally* deceived me. But by that I do not mean to assert that I have not differed from them: that I have,

seriously and widely ; but when I found I could not persuade them to think or act as I thought right, I allowed them to follow their own mind,—still retaining their affection as before,—and frequently having the pleasure of hearing them acknowledge that they had done wrong.

Every voyage now saw Charles advanced a step, from third mate to second mate, and then to first mate. He stowed away a cargo to admiration ; kept the men alive and in good spirits by the animation and frankness of his address ; while his determination ensured prompt obedience. He minded us all at home by some little present on every opportunity ; and through the kind offices of Captain Manly and his own merit, of which the owners were aware, he was appointed to the command of a fine new ship of one thousand tons. His owners had two vessels of that size launched at the same time, the ' Pearl ' and the ' Ruby.' Charles was to get the first, and another of Mr Manly's old mates the other. He had picked out a mate for himself, whom he had long known and esteemed ; and while it was thought two months would elapse ere they could be ready to sail, he came down to spend one month with us. Buoyant in spirit, and on full pay as a captain, we never saw him better company. There was a kindness, a thoroughly obliging disposition about him ; and in some ornamental work for the house he assisted his sisters so handily, and with so much taste, that a visitor young lady said—

' Charles, I wonder that one so neat-handed as you, and with so much taste, ever thought of going to be a sailor ? What in all the earth made you ? '

' Just because I was a young headstrong fool. But for all that,' he added, ' I would not be a counter-jumper yet, although I had my time to begin again.'

Before his month was out he received a letter from his owners requesting him to join the ' Pearl ' immediately, as both the ' Pearl ' and ' Ruby ' were taken up by Government to convey ammunition, artillery, and warlike stores to India, the Sepoy rebellion having broken out. Of course he was off immediately, and his wardrobe, completed for the use of the *captain*, followed.

The two vessels left for their destination in the same tide ; and to the captain of the ' Pearl's ' mortification, he found he could not beat the ' Ruby,' neither when beating up nor running along, except in a gale, when his ship had as much advantage over the ' Ruby ;' and, on the whole, he had the mortification to find the ' Ruby ' had arrived,

and was at moorings, twenty-four hours before the 'Pearl.' They were to discharge with all speed, and run back rather light to Britain for more and more of same sort of cargo, if a sudden stop were not put to the mutiny, of which at that time, from its very formidable appearance, there was little prospect. By dint of uncommon activity on the part of the 'Pearl,' greatly assisted by the orderly stowage of her cargo, and the spirit of the crew, who were promised a bribe of a sovereign each if they beat the 'Ruby,' they did beat her, notwithstanding her first advantage of two whole days. On the landing at their port, I received a letter from the captain, as we now lost no opportunity of calling him, written in fine spirits; and the day before he was to sail again, one of his sisters received a short bright letter from him, full of joyous anticipations; and we were all full of plans for enjoying the captain and his month of liberty when he should arrive. All at this time with us was health, happiness, and commercial prosperity, and with deep regret I thought I perceived more of a tendency to pride than thankfulness prevailing among it. We calculated the month he would have to spare with us would be that of August, the finest month of all the year, in my estimation, for enjoying pleasure-trips into the country.

We were calculating and watching the newspapers every morning. We were sure she was due according to the time she took going out. At last 'The "Pearl" arrived' met our eye, and electrified us all. We would get a letter next post delivery. No. The captain did not use to be so careless of us. Perhaps the owners had gone on board of him. But there was a letter in town, and at two o'clock my law-agent made his appearance, looking bland as usual.

'Are you to have any one with you to-day? I have brought the papers of Miller's mortgage, and would like to go over it with you after dinner by ourselves.'

He was sad, and said he was not very well, by way of accounting for it; but, with a faint smile, he hoped to be better after dinner; and we walked home leisurely. I said, 'The "Pearl" is in, and we have no letter.'

'So your son told me.'

I was surprised at his taciturnity—so different from his usual way.

'We will go into your room, if you please, for I want this bundle of papers out of my pocket, and to wash my hands.'

As soon as the door was shut he said, 'Sit down, Mr Meetwell, for

I have sad news for you. You said the "Pearl" had arrived; she has, but not your son. Charles is gone!

I looked up at him, but spoke not. I understood him, but did not feel the effect of his news.

'Here is a letter from the owners. The secretary knew how intimate we were, and sent this letter to me, desiring I would break the sad news to you in the most prudent manner.' It was addressed to myself:—'Dear sir—It is my painful duty to inform you of the death of your son, Captain Meetwell. On the second day after the "Pearl" left the port on her return voyage, he took to bed. For three days he continued sensible, and would on no account hear of the vessel returning to port on his account, as he said he felt sure he would soon get better; and all had hopes till the fifth day, when he suddenly sank, and expired on the morning of the sixth day. In the death of Captain Meetwell, our company has sustained a great loss. No one knew his duty better, or performed it more conscientiously. His remains were carefully prepared for being brought home by his friend the mate; but more than half the crew being strangers, and very superstitious, and the weather proving unusually calm and hot, the mate, for fear of mutiny, had no help but consent to consign his remains to the deep on the third day after his death. The fullest honour was paid at this sad ceremony, and the burial service read over in the most solemn manner. The mate is now captain of the "Pearl;" and, as we doubt not you or some of your family will be up to get all particulars, we refer you to him. All your son's effects have been inventoried. Accept of the sympathy of the owners under this sad bereavement, and I remain, dear sir, faithfully yours,

'AUGUSTINE SMITH, *Secretary*.'

We were not strangers to Mr Smith, and perhaps his letter was more fully expressed on that account. I understood every word of the letter, but I remained speechless. My friend asked me if I was sick. No—I was stunned; I felt it would require a long time to comprehend my loss. Our daughter announced that dinner was on the table. 'Send your mother here.' She came quickly, and two of her daughters followed, remaining outside. On hearing a shriek from their mother, they burst into the room. In a moment Charles's death was over all the house, and all rushed to the privacy of their bedrooms to give vent to the sadness of their hearts in abundance of tears. It is a

great relief to be able to weep. I could not. With me, a heavy load seems laid upon me, so that I cannot breathe freely, and it continues months, till time, and writing, and speaking all wear it away by insensible degrees. After what I have described of our joyful anticipations connected with Charles's coming home, I need not describe our sorrow. I can only describe my own. Besides the load I spoke of, which so oppressed me, I felt that although I went out in the bright sunshine, it seemed dim as moonlight; and if I drew my hand across my eyes, I was no better. I did not see the green freshness of the meadows. I was haunted by a feeling as if some black shadow was always behind me, and that I could detect it with the tail of my eye, which caused me frequently to look around me. A long interval had elapsed since death had visited our house; and with concurrence of my wife and family, I issued one hundred intimation cards. Had I been fully aware that all who received intimation cards in town were expected to call, perhaps I would not have been so foolish. Those who called first were welcome, for they were actuated by sympathy, and we were glad to see them; but to be tied up to expect calls, and give cake and wine every day for a month to parties whose calls proceeded from ostentation or curiosity, and who thought they were honouring you by so doing! Oh! it was irksome to hear their make-believe speeches. Many of them did not know Charles; and yet, when we got time to think calmly, what was our grief compared to hers who was following 'the only son of his mother, and she was a widow?' Yes, the only son of a widow who hears of the sad bereavement that her dear only boy, her whole hope and support, fell from the rigging on a dark night into the sea, and was seen no more! How few weep with her!

We preferred to go to London by steam. It was a slack time rather for passengers, and of course more pleasant. I was accompanied by a son and daughter, neither of whom had seen London. We reached the great metropolis of the world under favourable circumstances; and as we proceeded to our bespoke lodgings, called at the owner's office, and intimated our arrival. Next morning, at the hour appointed, accompanied by our friend Mr Smith, we visited the 'Pearl,' and saw the captain and the carpenter, both of whom Charles had an affection for. We saw the cabin, and where his writing-desk stood, which I gave him, and the bed wherein he died, and got his pocket-book, watch, knife, and pencil-case from them. Our hearts were full

enough ; but our grief was allayed by the respect and affection with which they spoke of him. All his effects had to pass through the mercantile shipping office, where we would find them safe to the most minute article. We went to the shipping office next day, and fulfilled all forms. The crew of the 'Pearl' were at the door, some thirty in number, waiting to be paid up all the arrears of wages. I heard, 'Captain Meetwell's father, and brother, and sister.' We passed through between them, and I lifted my hat to them, bowing right and left, which salute was most heartily responded to. To the humbled and the broken-hearted how sweet is sympathy, even from the humblest ! The new captain and the carpenter came by appointment to take tea with us at seven o'clock, dressed both of them like gentlemen. We felt the compliment. Their hearts were full, as well as our own ; and as soon as tea was over, we got every satisfaction from them. No sooner had the 'Pearl' arrived at her destination than the captain assembled the whole of her crew :

"Now, my lads, you see the 'Ruby' has beat us out by a day ; let us see if we can't put our cargo ashore a day before him. I will do my own part ; and if we succeed, each one of you, apprentices and all, shall have a present of a sovereign, if it should come out of my own pocket."

'We answered the captain with a cheer ; and to it we went and did we not work ? It was awfully hot, and two of our men took fever ; but I,' said the carpenter, 'took care of them, and brought them round.'

'Can you act as a doctor ?'

'Yes, sir, I have brought through a good many,—more, I think, than the doctors ; for, you see, sir, they are always trying new experiments, and sometimes they kill as oft as cure. Well, our captain, he had purchased a light, broad-brimmed straw hat, with a blue ribbon, and we knew him by it everywhere. He would be down among the flats in the river the one moment, and then down in our hold the next ; and again you would see him driving off to the town to make sure that our cargo was ready to be sent down as soon as we could take it. We had our cargo out two days before the "Ruby," and were off, not with a full cargo ; but we were sure the "Ruby" could take all the rest, and not be deeper than we were, for we heard ships were very much wanted at home. So we put to sea at once ; and after we had been a day at sea, our captain said to me—

"White, I am very much in want of a rest, and I think I will need some of your medicine; for I feel a throbbing of the temples, and a sort of sick giddiness."

"I did not like to hear of these symptoms, but said nothing. Sol gave him the medicines, and he was quite the better of them, and said he thought he would get up on the morrow; but when it came, he was no better, and the captain there can tell you what followed."

"When White told me," said the other, "he thought the captain was to be seriously ill, I went below and proposed that we should return to port, that he might get the best medical assistance. As soon as he understood me, he said in his usual quick way—

"On your life, no; I go home with the ship. I am better here, in this well-aired ship, than I would be ashore; and White is as good a doctor as any landsman of them all, and better, too, in my opinion. I may not be able to give you orders all the time, but keep on your voyage; I think I will soon be better."

Then White resumed:

"The captain did not get better, but worse. I kept his bowels open; I gave him wine occasionally, and a little brandy too, and sponged him all over with tepid water and vinegar; and as long as he was able he used to say, when I wiped his face and rubbed up his head—

"That is nice, White; I like it."

"But his mind began to wander, and he became delirious, sir, and I had to get another to help me to keep him in bed. In fact, sir, he had had far too much work in yon awfully hot sun, and too much excitement. I knew that high delirium was a bad sign, and I did what I could; but when it left him, he was so exhausted he could not speak, but I think he was sensible he was dying."

"He wished the captain there, and myself, to be always beside him by his looks, and he returned the grasp of our hands as long as he was able. The fever is not infectious; at least that is my opinion. At the last he made signs, as we thought, that he wanted to get up; and we raised him up to a sitting posture. He had one hand on the captain's shoulder there, and the other on mine, for his bed was on the cabin floor. He gave a few gasping-like breathings, and then his head fell forward, and all was over." The carpenter continued: "I washed his body every inch of it ere I left it; 'twas the last I could do for him who had been so kind to me; but towards the conclusion of my

office, I began to feel sick, and after washing myself as thoroughly as my strength would permit, I took to my hammock, and for two days, I may say, I neither ate nor drank. I loathed food. I almost loathed life, and I felt almost a wish that I might also die.'

The captain here spoke up:—'I had something else to do, for the moment the crew knew it, they seemed to think themselves released from all authority; they were scattered over the deck in groups, and talking very busily. I knew it was a critical time, but I knew also that I must appear decided and firm. So I took on me the rank of captain, and with the mate, second mate, and third mate, held a council. I deputed these three to speak to those of the crew whose hearts we knew were sound, to stand by to second us; and then we four armed ourselves, and calling together the crew, I told them I was now in command of the ship, that we must maintain order and subordination, and strain every nerve to proceed on our voyage.

"You'll never make way with a dead body on board," said a voice.

"Who spoke?" No one answered. I then appointed the watches, so as to have always trusty men half of the watch in number. I could see looks exchanged, and I added, "My first duty is to enforce subordination, and I am prepared to do it." Next day it had become almost a dead calm; the decks were so hot, but for watering them we could not have stood upon them. On the third day Mr White was up again, and was making an oblong square box made air-tight, with pitch within and without, to contain the captain's remains. At this unmistakable evidence of an intention to carry home the captain's remains, we could observe a general consternation; even our trusty men remonstrated. The calm still continued; the heat was intense; the crew enfeebled by superstitious terror. We retired, and consulted again. We saw the crew were almost all on one side, and we resolved to give it up.

'Before the last watch at sunset, I called up all hands, and told them to get up next morning, and make the ship perfectly clean from stem to stern; all to breakfast at eight o'clock, and appear on deck at nine o'clock washed and dressed in their best, as the captain's remains would be committed to the deep at ten o'clock. It was another hot still day; the vessel made no way; and the orders of the preceding day were carried into full effect, for to work amongst water was delightful. The flags were hoisted half-mast high, and at half-past nine we came upon deck. The captain's coffin was placed on deck under an

awning. The body was first wrapt in linen cloth, and then in tarred cloth tied up tight; then placed in the strong wooden coffin, made by Mr White; the whole filled up with gravel from the ship's lower ballast tier. By this time it was a great weight. It was then sewed into canvass.'

All was beautifully decorous. The captain, as soon as all was arranged, came on deck. He paused for a minute, looked up and down the array of clean, humble, devout-looking men and boys. He then said: 'Let us read in the word of God for our profit at this time, "Let not your hearts be troubled;" you will find it in the fourteenth chapter of St John's Gospel.' He read it very well; Mr White, who also read beautifully, reading every alternate verse, pausing between each verse as long as you could count ten. The English Church service for the burial of the dead at sea was read by the captain, Mr White acting as clerk. At the end of it, and as ten o'clock was now come, the coffin was advanced upon rollers, and placed upon the plank, which was then advanced by slow degrees till it overbalanced, and the heavy coffin with a sullen plunge went swirling down into the deep. The bubbles and eddies ceased; the plank was hauled on board; one gun only was discharged; the ship's flags were hoisted up as on rejoicing occasions; and all was over.

The crew got two hours to change their clothes, and most fortunately a fair breeze came on at sunset, and the 'Pearl' was running along about eight knots an hour, with every stitch of canvass set, homeward bound.

The captain added: 'Not one of that crew will ever believe otherwise than that the calm came when the captain died, and the breeze because he was buried. I believe I have no more to say.'

At nine o'clock they left us. I hinted that I would like to meet them next day at the owner's office about eleven o'clock, as I wished to present them with some token in memory of my dear son. All three of us, myself, my son, and my daughter, were unanimous in expressing our satisfaction with the modesty, intelligence, truthfulness, and good feeling of our two guests; they had spoken so kindly of Charles that we were delighted; and we knew that they spoke true, for all they said of him was so characteristic.

Next morning we were at the owner's office by ten o'clock, to consult with Mr Smith what would be most suitable as a gift. He said they were gone by the earliest trains, one east, another west, to spend

a week or two with their relatives. We never saw nor heard from them again. It was a deep disappointment. However, on reflection, we owed them nothing, for Charles had been kind to them, and had helped them forward, and I do believe they shrank from anything like a gift.

Next day we went by boat, and landed near the new Houses of Parliament, and walked about till I was quite fagged; for though I enjoyed the young folk's company as a diversion to my sad thoughts, yet every now and then I imagined the black shadow was behind me. Very anxious for a rest, we sauntered into Westminster Abbey. Service was being performed; I could not resist it; I stole in, and they followed me. I got to the top of a pew, buried my face in my hands, and gave way to my long pent-up feelings. The thin audience, the grandeur and solemnity of the chapel, the stillness, the coolness, the quiet touching beauty of the chanting from a dozen of clear-voiced boys;—each response of 'We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord,' was accompanied with a slight touch of the organ, and a pause, during which you could hear the echo dying amidst the remote corners of this glorious edifice;—it was so sweet a contrast from bustle and noise and sorrow, to peace, repose, and heavenly melody, that I enjoyed the luxury of tears in abundance, and was greatly relieved. I need not describe our reception at home, for I wrote them every day, and Charles's mother knew all we knew ere we got home. It was a fortnight after that ere Charles's chest and all his other effects arrived, carefully packed up and sealed, through the Merchant Seamen's Office, that most valuable institution. The chest and all the other things were unpacked in presence of all; every one got a keepsake; it was a mournful but deeply interesting afternoon of four hours we spent over it. Everything was packed up again, and sent to Helen Meetwell's to be washed and mended, and put in the best order. We did not want to excite the idle curiosity of our neighbours; but it was a deeply interesting sight to me to see all his well-remembered garments spread out on the little green. After which, by consent of all parties, we made presents of the greater part to young men in needful circumstances, who had been put or were about to be put apprentices to the sea.

Time has worn away the bitterness of grief, but, thanks be to God! the sweet remembrance of our dear Charles remains: to myself, whose time must of necessity be near a close, it is perhaps most vivid. How

ardently my soul longs for a more thorough and lively belief of the immortality of the soul! How earnestly I pray, Lord, increase my faith, that I may no longer doubt, but anticipate with hope and joy that other and better world into which sin and sorrow shall never enter, and from which sorrow and sighing shall flee for ever away!

SMOKING.

Let the young beware, and never touch a pipe, as a filthy practice and a foul slavery. It entails many evils on those who tamper with it. It takes away the bloom from the cheek, and gives it a cadaverous hue. It takes away the soft, sweet light of the eye, and makes it hard and stony; makes the teeth black and the breath foul. It injures the stomach; and, generally speaking, it dwarfs the man, and impairs his strength, and is especially destructive of nervous energy. The best that can be said of it is, that a man of a strong constitution may smoke with impunity. No master likes a man that smokes so well as one that does not. No father or mother would like to see son or daughter learn to smoke. No such thing as smoking should be allowed in any scholar of the national school. If only one ounce of tobacco is smoked in a week, it is thirteen shillings a year, besides so much time lost. Go to the savings bank with your money, for by-and-by tobacco will cost you forty shillings a year ere all is done. It destroys the books you read, the letters you write, the house you dwell in. It is, in sooth, a filthy practice, and a young man will have a far better chance to rise if he is not a smoker; for a smoker will leave the most genteel and instructive company to indulge himself in his filthy smoke. When we see a juvenile pulling away at his pipe, as if for dear life, what can we say but, Poor thing!

And shall I not say a parting word about Helen Meetwell, my dear cousin and faithful friend through life? She got two or three small legacies left her, which she carefully put into the bank. At her father's death, at the ripe age of sixty-nine years, an idea was started that a cottage should be built for her; and this having been realized, she was installed in a house of her own, so commodious that we could spend two or three months with her every summer, with all our young people, for she had two fine attic rooms with double beds. Her house was built in the same neighbourhood where she and her father

had lived so long, and she had gained the good-will of every one who knew her. She spends one month at least with us at the New-year; which we could not enjoy without her. She was well liked, and had no enemy; for she had no pride, all humility and kindness, deeply concerned in the welfare of every person suffering affliction or in poor circumstances. With little money to bestow, she could give sympathy; and a small pot of jelly. No youngster ever left her door without an apple or a biscuit or sweeties, or failing all these, a halfpenny. The carrier did every little message for her as pointedly as if it were to the Duke himself, for she stuck to the good old plan of treating with a dram. If she wanted coals driven, or firewood, or pease-stakes, or such like, she was served at once and cheerfully. Truly, she might be said to live in the midst of her own people. She had always more invitations than she could accept; for, notwithstanding her very quiet manner, she possessed a great fund of good sense, and was excellent company when with only one or two. It is seven years now since a respectable maiden lady asked if she would take her for a lodger. We demurred to this, and had twenty P's and Q's of objections; but Helen seemed to relish the idea. Fifty pounds the lady said she would give, and work the half of all the work, as she had been accustomed to work. She wanted a quiet life, and she wanted company, and she liked work, all which she got at Helen's; and she was so happy, she could now live entirely on her own means, and she felt now so independent. Her lodger and she went everywhere together, for no one need invite Helen without her. It had been a very fortunate step for both ladies; for we had, previous thereto, been frequently eerie about her living at times a month alone, although she thought nothing of it. Helen retained all her peculiarities, even when visiting us. No one would get leave to sit in damp clothes or wet shoes if she could help it, and could persuade them; at least she would try. She had been failing for two years. She grew weaker, and was short of breath; and when remonstrated with for working so much, she would say, 'Me! I do not work much; I just work a while and rest a while, and I take it very easy I assure you.' Her companion did her part cheerfully. At last she caught a little cold, which affected her breathing, and she said to her companion, 'Well, as you advise, I'll just keep my bed a day, and get a rest; it aye did me good.' But it did not this time, and we sent our doctor, who thought little of it, and prescribed a blister. Notwithstanding this, her second night was very restless. I saw her next day: 'Ah, but

I had a sore night of it ! I'm better now ; yes, I'm better.' But it was evident she was not relieved, and our doctor said, looking very grave, 'I am much disappointed, for neither has the blister risen, nor has the medicine acted at all as I expected ; I am afraid for her strength failing.' My daughter Mary—a second of the same name—her favourite, set off immediately, and manifested her concern by her grave looks, and could not help giving her a hint of her fears. The sufferer replied cheerfully : 'Oh, I've been as ill as this many times, and I think I'll soon be better.' But when it was put home to her, she appeared choked with emotion for a few minutes. To one so loved as she was, life was very sweet. 'Ah, weel, ah, weel, I'm sure I should not repine, for I've had a long day !' and she spoke little for some time afterwards. Next morning she was convinced that she was on her journey ; and, in answer, would say, 'Yes, I'm going home to my Father,' and seeing our inquiring look, she said, 'Yes, to the Father and the Son.' And when asked further if she felt easy in the prospect of death, she would say, 'Yes, I'm going home, and I am quite happy. I have no fears, I never had any, for I always trusted in Him who suffered for me.' Latterly she lay quiet, some one of us holding her hand, for, when let go, it seemed feeling about for the kindly grasp. Broken words of peace, from time to time, as she recognised who held her hand. 'William, my son, a man grown :' 'William always a good boy ! yes, always :' 'Mary, a sensible, kind-hearted lassie, you'll be kind to papa and mamma ;' and she fell lower and lower, and her latter end was peace. It would look silly, I'm afraid, if I were to say what a blank her death made. There was no exception ; all who knew her mourned her loss. Yet ours was not a painful but a sweet sorrow, if I may so call it. An element of happiness and of peace was taken away from amongst us. For myself, my sorrow was selfish ; for whenever I could spare an afternoon, and my mind was turbid and troubled, I would slip away, and take my tea and spend two hours with Helen. I confided freely in her ; yes, I told her everything. I found it relieved my mind, and she was safe, for she was never known to divulge the secrets of one friend to another, and I always returned home from Helen with the atmosphere of my mind cleared and purified. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God !'

CHAPTER XXXV.

STRAY THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS.

REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

THIS subject has agitated Britain for a few years, but appears now to have run its course, and, like many other epidemics, has almost died away. When we first heard of it, we felt pure astonishment, and determined to watch its progress, which I think was from America to Ireland, and then it was imported here. When we heard of it, as being much wanted here, we could not forbear asking why? Are we not very religious already? What was the Church and Voluntary controversy good for? Was not everything during that vivid controversy vital to religion brought forward? Was not the Church, in comparison with the Voluntaries, found lax and incompetent? and did this conviction not split the Church in twain in the memorable May month 1843? Has not the Free Church ever since wrought with surprising energy and success, having prompted the Establishment to such a degree that they are stepping out boldly, so as almost to distance the Frees? And during these twenty years has not every point of vital importance to religion been brought forward, eagerly discussed, and enforced? And it had good effects on all parties, in stimulating ministers, elders, deacons, and teachers, to exert themselves to the very uttermost. Some may say it was all competition and partisanship. Much of that, no doubt; but along with that, there were many pious Christians who made it a subject of conscientious consideration and earnest prayer. At this time burst upon our ears, Revival of religion in America and wondrous tidings. Then revival of religion in Ireland, and miracles there. We felt very anxious for facts—dry facts; but reports were industriously raised, copied, and re-copied, till the very atmosphere was infected; and one durst hardly open his mouth in inquiry but some zealot would exclaim, ‘Do you doubt the power of God, or the Holy Spirit?’ and then quote you some prophecy, and ask you if all these had not to be fulfilled. The only answer was silence, or else be counted a scoffer. At last I had an opportunity. I had heard of the great doings in Port Hope; and the first time I was in it after the great doings had been sounded about, I was in the

house of a most respectable man of fifty-five years, an elder of the United Presbyterian congregation; and having some business to transact with him, after it was over, I said, 'Now, I would like to know the particulars of this revival of yours, about which so much has been said in the newspapers.'

'Oh, you are an unbeliever!' spake up his wife.

'I hope not,' I said; 'but I wish to know what I am to believe has happened in your own place from yourselves, so as I may understand it.'

'Understand it! who can understand the ways of God?' again said the gudewife.

I said no more till I was outside with William. 'Now tell me all about it, William, as far as you know yourself.'

'Weel, sir, you see, when the word of the revivals came here from Ireland, all our three ministers paid great attention to it,—the Established minister, our ain minister, and the Free Church minister, for they're a' very sensible men, sir. And so the Free Church minister, he gaed over to Ireland a' the way to see; and after he came back, our ain minister went, and they baith came back very serious, an' be-good to be very earnest with their people; and the Established minister was as earnest as any of them, although he did not keep prayer-meetings oftener than ordinary.'

'Well, and what was the result? what was the good done?'

'Weel, sir, the people grew very attentive, and came out willingly to the prayer-meetings, and on Sabbath too, and a considerable number of them were a vast the better.'

'Well, but William, what about drinking?'

'Weel, sir, that is just the thing I had almost forgotten, for all the ministers were real anxious to get the better of that habit, for they are all sensible men, sir; and I assure you they wrought wonders, for a great number gave up using spirits. We had five public-houses in our place last year, and now we have only two; but if it stand good for a haill twelvemonth, I would begin to have good hopes; but so many fall away.'

In answer to the question: 'The population of Port Hope is twenty-five hundred.'

Being very well acquainted with a liberal-minded pious widow lady, who was deeply impressed with the importance of the revival movement, we accompanied her to church. Her clergyman seemed as if he

could never say enough, and was evidently deeply affected, and very solemn. I said all I could say in truth; but my praise fell a little short of what was expected. The lady was farming a large piece of country left in lease by her husband, and was doing it well; and she was renowned for her hospitality to clergymen, and allowed her house for meetings, and her people to go to prayer-meetings through the week, and all like one in downright earnest, as she certainly was. But she was shrewd as well as pious, and spoke with discrimination and good sense. About a year and a half after I met her, she was considerably changed in respect to the effects of the revival movement. I brought on the subject. 'Aweel,' she said, 'I had but little profit by these revival movements, for my people grew, men and women of them, so very conceited, that they seemed to forget I was their mistress. I do not know what they thought about religion, but it made them so high-headed, that they thought I had no right to be their mistress; and such saucy answers and stiffness I got from all of them, I was quite provoked. And what do you think I did last Martinmas?' Of course I could not guess. 'Well, I paid them off, every skin of them. I made a clean house of them; for I thought if I left any, they would poison the newcomers. I'm no half so keen about these extraordinary things as I was.' Ministers of the most cautious and earnest nature were forced along by the torrent, and obliged to preach out of doors, and hold extra prayer-meetings; and the more violent and assured preachers, who almost seemed to arrogate prophetic powers to themselves, were most of all followed by the crowds. I am not aware of any miraculous conversions amongst my acquaintances, although it is impossible to doubt that some good was done. My attention was strongly drawn to the demeanour of all my own acquaintances at that time; and I have witnessed with great pleasure at times the softened tone, the kind look, the half-uttered contradiction suppressed, and self-control exercised; and I set these down in many cases to the influence of religion, teaching that humility and kindness so essential as parts of Christian character.

But I would not be doing justice to this subject, if I did not express my horror at the late meetings held about these times; to the protracted services, the dreadful tone of voice, and the attempt to shake and overcome weak-minded people, till they cried out or fell fainting. It was cruel, injudicious, and unchristian. There is as much religion in gratitude to God, and cheerfulness of life,—as much religion in

flowers and sunshine, and enjoyment of all the good things God has provided for us,—as there is in the habits of those who speak of disease and death, and dwell on gloomy subjects, as if religion was more especially connected with them, and with objects that affright and terrify. Go to the life and words of the Saviour, and see if there is any warrant for these; for ‘My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

Walking in to business one morning with my neighbour, a shrewd, upright man, who paid every ordinary respect to religion, we could not keep off the subject of these revivals. He seemed uneasy, but afraid to speak out, until I said I thought these affairs were degrading religion from its high place, and opening the door to pitiful nervous superstition.

He now burst out, ‘I’ll tell you what it is that makes me dislike that set of people you term preachers. I was surprised, on going home one night, to find the largest room of our house full of people, gathered in from the neighbourhood, and that noted agitator B. N. engaged in worship with them. Therefore, I said nothing to interrupt them; but seeing our own minister there, concluded he had brought this B. N. to my house. You know our minister,—as good, and as earnest, and as modest a man as lives.’ I assented. ‘Well, I remained quiet while the religious exercises were going on, and until the agitator asked if none of them—looking towards a female and offering her his hand—wished to have a little serious conversation in private with him. She accompanied him, and in about a quarter of an hour returned very much discomposed, and in tears. A second female went through the same course, and with like effect; and a third, my own wife, and she returned worse than any of them, for she is nervous naturally. I was boiling by this time, and hoped it would be my turn next; but no, I suppose they could interpret my looks, and I am sure at that time they were black enough. Oh, let them alone, they know the nervous timid ones well, and the bold ones too. Soon after they broke up. As soon as they were gone, “Dear me,” I says to my wife, “what is the meaning of all this? Is my house to be turned into a confessional? What made you cry? What had he to say to you? I wish I knew.” All I could get from her was, that she could not help it; and she looked so imploringly at me, that in pity for her weakness, I let the matter drop. But I will allow no more such meetings to be held in my house, you may rely on that.’

I am not conscious that I have overdrawn any of the preceding narratives, either in spirit or in letter.

But I cannot conclude this article without, in justice to the subject, assenting to the increased efficacy of weekly prayer-meetings. The minister now considers that at these meetings he can more unrestrainedly converse with his people, and analyze the motives, heart, and life of all in a reasoning way, such as to convince every mind; for Christianity, of all the religions of the world, is the most reasonable, and we cannot but rejoice in it. Truth and candour will prevail more and more; the age will not be content with less; and such words as secularist, rationalist, naturalist, will be less and less used as terms of reproach.

THE GAME LAWS.

A great proportion of the public only know the evils of the game laws by hearsay, and consequently their minds are not deeply impressed by them. On a late pleasure-jaut of ten days, I made the effects of these oppressive laws the object of my inquiries. Dining at a farmer's table in the Lowlands, a neighbouring farmer who was present mentioned that his proprietor had sent him his annual present of one hare, as payment in full for having fed his hares and rabbits for twelve months! Our host also mentioned that, feeling the plague of hares and rabbits insufferable, he had employed a man to shoot them down. The proprietor happening to pass, addressed the man sternly, 'Take care what you are about, sir; for if you shoot a single head of game, you will soon find yourself in jail.' At the next farm they would not speak; the fact is, they killed a good many for their own use; but their proprietor was not a violent game-preserver, and they were suffered to pass. Next was a large hill farm, and here the complaints were most bitter. After dinner I said to our host, 'Do you shoot much now?' 'Na; thae days are awa, and I'll warrant you know that;' alluding to an annual present of ten hares which we used to have sent us about Christmas by our host, now for two or three years discontinued.

'But you'll have your hound yet?'

'Na, nor yet hound either. New lairds, new laws, man. I canna bide to speak about it,' relapsing into indignant silence.

His neighbour, a homely body from north away, said, 'Ye see the gudeman there just gaes past speaking when ye begin upon that sub-

ject; but 'od, I'll speak for him, for I suffer on my wee bit place as muckle conform as he daes. We're just molestit out of our very life wi' sae many creatures devouring us up. There's the brown hares, and the white hares are just swarmin' about's. The pheasants, ye see, dinna thrive wi's; they've tried them owre and owre again, but they canna stand our winter. But oh, that vermin o' rabbits, they're worst of a'; they're just insufferable. What sorra gart them bring them here? for they brought a haill cart-load of them in big square baskets, and loot them out upon's. Man, i' the time of a storm we dinna ken what to do with them.'

'But rabbits are not game,' I said.

'Weel, maybe no; but, man, if ye fire a gun here, although it were only to kill a craw, ye never heard sic a noise gets up. "Wha fired that gun?" cries ane. "What was you shooting?" says anither. An' syne our twa gamekeepers, they'll be doun next to speer a' the outs an' ins about it, for they're aye scourin' about. Twa ringin' rascals they are, trailing through ilka ane of our fields, and killin' game at your very door; askin' questions at a' our folk, and carryin' hame great budgets o' country clashes an' tales to Sir William: an' the mair the welcomer i' my opinion, for there's nae muckle hereabout to keep them frae wearyin', sin' the lang nichts cam in; an' if ony o' us hae a bit pairty o' twa or three friends, auld Sir William and Lady Helen will ken a' about it neist day as weel's we do ourselves. Between us twa, we pay the knight seven hundred and eighty pounds for thir out-by places; and to be molestit as we are, passes a' patience. They eat our neeps a' winter, and our braird and corn suffers sair at their hand. This bygone year they were just odious, ye see, they were sae sair upon us. The gudeman's nae speakin', but I ken fine what he thinks. Did they no' come down this very spring and clear aff his haill garden till him,—a' thing awa' afore them—a' green thing, carrots, and ingans an' a'? Ye wadna believe it, if ye hadna seen it.'

Looking at our host, who maintained a sulky silence, I said, 'Is this really the case, or is Bogton just painting a little?'

'Oh, it's true enough; he's sayin' naething mair than the verity,' and again he relapsed into silence.

Again Boggie took speech in hand: 'But we've made up our minds, for we canna thole langer, and we sudna thole; we maun resist sometime, an' we're to gie in our accounts. We've been keepin' count correctly, an' gotten our damage valued ilka month. We wad

need twa hundred and fifty pounds frae Sir William; an' if he winna gie us our demand, we're to begin an' fell (kill) even forrit, and just let him try himsel'.

At the next farm of Bonnyrigs, a softer tone prevailed. He said the bit plantin' keepit aff the grouse wonderfully, for they were birds that did not like to flee.

'But these rabbits?' said I.

'Weel, they are ill aneugh; but we get some use of them. Oor laddies can tak' them finely. We never wants, na. But that was a sair job at our neiber's there at Moss-side twa year syne. Mossie had a friend bidin' wi' him—a young man learnin' farmin'—a nice chap. It wis i' the time of the snaw, an' the blackcocks and ither creatures cam' in about, and were tearin' at the stacks i' the very corn-yard. Weel, disna they lat flee at them? an' nae wonder, for it was real provokin'. They killed twa o' them; but they soon got the road to the court, an' were fined fifteen pounds. They appealt it, but they were nae better. Wisna that dear game for their Christmas dinners?'

I learned afterwards that Bonny's son was employed as gamekeeper to an Englishman who came every year to shoot over his father's farm, for the proprietor did not interfere with the game on this estate at all, and it was as good as fifty pounds to this poor Hillfoot farmer; and that was a great sum for one who had been always very poor. As to Moss-side, there were two considerations against him. He, too, was under the same proprietor, and had sold the right to the game all over his farm, and had no right to shoot at all. Besides, to kill game at that time o' year might be a crime by the statute-book, but assuredly it was no sin to protect his own corn-yard; and that such severity of punishment should in any case have followed such a reasonable action, marks a despotism hardly credible, yet quite true.

Our next farmer had got a *good bargain* about the year 1854, before the great rise in land took place. He was very cautious, and did not speak out, perhaps for fear his words might be repeated. He, however, fell into a musing mood, and by-and-by said emphatically: 'Just lat us hae onything like a scarcity, or a famine; then the game would soon be cleared awa'. They wad just be exterminated, an' nae wonder; I'm sure they're just swarmin' here.'

All the preceding information I got on the said ten days' pleasure-jaut; the following came after in the same fall:—

'I was telling you about how we wis like to be eaten up with rats;

it's the large gray rat we have. Well, we are no better yet, for the last of my stacks yielded me a boll less than the others; and they were sore destroyed. How can it be otherwise? All the creatures that are enemies to the rats are killed for fear they should disturb the game. Up at the stables and at the kennel, there are hundreds of skins of weasels and other creatures nailed on the doors, and we cannot get dog nor cat kept. Last Sabbath afternoon I took a dander up by the avenue leading to the place, and in a footpath there was a trap set, baited with a piece of a rabbit; and lying beside the trap was a short club-like thing, a' bloody; and looking round, here was two gallant cats lying in a bush. I was real wae and angry baith. Do you know young Spunkie that's come to the Hilton? A nice young fellow. Well, he has a bonnie collie, and real fond he was of his dog. He was on his road coming down to our house, when up got a hare, and off his dog went. He tried to call him back, but in vain, for collies bark so much. By-and-by he hears first one shot an' then another; and then such fearful yelling from the poor dog! But they had beaten out its life with the butt-end of the gun, for part of the broken stock was left on the ground; and poor collie had been thrown out of sight into some bush. The keeper was off too, or maybe there would have been more blood spilt, for Hilton was mighty fond of his dog. And he says it's just a mercy he did not meet the keeper at the time.'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION OF MY NARRATIVE.

IT is time this was come to, for I feel the powers of life ebbing so fast away that what I am to do I must do quickly, or it will be left undone. I am quite aware that I have written on many topics of which it may perhaps justly be said I was not competent to write. Let my opinions, however, go for what they are worth. I have made no pretensions to scholarship. I have told my story—the story of my life and experience. I do not think there is a single idea put forth, unless such had the sanction of my own mind; and very few are transplanted, for I did not like it. I wished my own ideas to come to maturity; and then, when

I found them sanctioned by good authority, I felt myself established in them. Few men are at perfect liberty to write their own opinions.

Before FINIS is put to this volume, I would like, by way of farewell, to state my present condition. I am, when I write this, enjoying fair health, but on a very nice balance. It would be unseemly to detail the infirmities of age too nicely. Very little, however, affects me, and brings on my asthmatic feeling; and it may be eleven o'clock A.M. each morning ere I am quite free. But to venture out if there is hoar-frost or damp I never try; cough would come on directly. My eyes and my ears serve me almost as well as ever. How thankful it makes me, when I meet my old friend John Thomson! He is rich; but I would almost avoid him, he is so thoroughly deaf; and cry as loud as you please, he will misunderstand you. It will not do on the street at all. One of his best friends spends every Sabbath afternoon with him. His housekeeper and his lass are sent out, but the kettle is left boiling, and over their two tumblers of punch they roar as loud as they please. It is a cruel privation, and he looks very sad and stupid-like, poor man! My appetite falls away fast, especially in winter, when I am much in the house, getting no exercise, so to speak; but hitherto I have always been well, and enjoyed the summer very much—my appetite much improved; but even then, if I expose myself for five minutes to the open window of a railway carriage, I feel my throat husky. Death is near me, and taking familiarities with me every day. When any symptom shows itself of ill health, I immediately imagine it must be progressive, and watch with great anxiety the next signs; and oh! how glad I am when the change begins to turn! My spirits get up, so that it shows me how sweet life is. I am glad I can enjoy my writing; and I often think how painful it would be to me to be paralyzed and need to be lifted about. But I think, if the die were once cast, and death evidently approaching, with the help of God, I would meet him with submission and hope. I never had a slavish or a servile fear of my God and Saviour; indeed, I have sometimes and often had such sanguine hopes as I almost fear to write; and yet, to be true to my promise, I must. It is this. If it pleased God, I should wish to retain consciousness to the last. This I fear does not happen often; and there is a question, too, What is 'the last?' for death, I think, is often more a process than an act,—the mind showing gradually diminishing degrees of consciousness, as the body loses

vitality. But I have fancied the moment when the soul, trembling, and almost dissipated by the shock of death, slowly converges again to its centre, still trembling, but gradually settling into a luminous yet invisible body—clear, entire, and conscious of all around. Oh joy! the fear of death and the doubt of immortality are passed; for the soul thinks, and sees, and hears in perfection,—views all around, knows that the struggle is over, sees the mourners and the inanimate body, knows that all is accomplished here, and with an ecstasy which no heart can conceive, calls, ‘O my God, I feel Thee; where art Thou?’ Then the mists clear away, and the spirit feels itself irresistibly, but how swiftly imagination cannot conceive, drawn towards our Creator and Redeemer. We see all transparently clear. God is unveiled. But what eye can look upon the Deity? Our celestial companion now is at our side—the man whom of all others we shunned on earth. His eyes speak for him—full of purity, love, and intelligence. In an instant our souls are knit together, for we are all one in Christ Jesus. All those beloved ones whom we parted from in grief and sorrow, whose death wrung our hearts, we now meet. We have only to recall the memory, and form the wish, when lo! as if heart beat with heart, they are with us. How very sweet to dwell upon the past, to think of those dark days of trial and privation, now that we have emerged into the light of eternal day! How our hearts swell with grateful emotions to Him who loved us, who lived amongst us, and died for us! But words fail us. Truly eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the good things laid up in store by God for those who love Him.

THE END.



